DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 481 852 EC 309 878

AUTHOR	Bullock, Lyndal M., Ed.; Gable, Robert A., Ed.
TITLE	School-Wide Proactive Approaches to Working with Students with Challenging Behaviors.
INSTITUTION	Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders.
ISBN	ISBN-0-86586-973-1
PUB DATE	2003-00-00
NOTE	67p.; Highlights from the Forum on School-Wide Proactive Approaches to Working with Students with Challenging Behaviors (Tampa, FL, February 15-16, 2002).
AVAILABLE FROM	Council for Exceptional Children, 1110 North Glebe Rd., Arlington, VA 22201-5704. Tel: 888-232-7733 (Toll Free); e-mail: service@cec.sped.org; Web site: http://www.cec.sped.org.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - General (020) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Accommodations (Disabilities); *Behavior Disorders; *Behavior Modification; Discipline; Educational Environment; Elementary Secondary Education; Functional Behavioral Assessment; *Intervention; Prevention; *School Personnel
IDENTIFIERS	*Positive Behavioral Support

ABSTRACT

This monograph presents highlights from a 2002 forum on school-wide approaches to working with students with challenging behaviors. The forum's focus was on ways to make systemic changes to create school environments that support the use of positive academic and behavioral interventions at the building and classroom levels. The following presentations of keynote speakers are included: (1) "Behavior in the Schools: Issues Related to Students with Challenging Behaviors" (Richard Van Acker); (2) "Accommodations and Modifications for Students with Challenging Behaviors: Collaborating with General Education" (Michael N. Hazelkorn); (3) "Strategic Use of School Personnel: Providing Meaningful Behavioral Supports for Students with Challenging Behaviors and the School Personnel Who Work with Them" (Mary Karen Oudeans); (4) "Managing Kids: Direct Answers for Tricky Issues" (Anthony Moriaty); and (5) "Developing Effective Behavioral Intervention Plans and Positive Behavioral Supports" (Richard Van Acker). Also included are summaries of the following discussion groups and leaders: "Proactive Approaches To Working with Challenging Behaviors: Voices from the Field" (Howard S. Muscott and others); "Improving School Climate: Moving from 'Your Kids' to 'Our Kids'" (Karen Barnest and others); "Practicing an Ethos of Care: Laying a Foundation for School-Wide Proactive Approaches" (Teresa L. Teaff and Cathy Kea); "The Academic/Behavioral Connection: Working Effectively with Students with Challenging Behaviors" (Beverley H. Johns); and "Meeting the Needs of Students with Emotional or Behavioral Disorders through Proactive Approaches" (Mary E. Little). (Individual presentations and discussion summaries contain references.) (DB)

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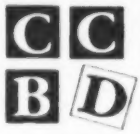

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School-Wide Proactive Approaches to Working with Students with Challenging Behaviors

Highlights from the Forum on School-Wide Proactive Approaches to Working with Students with Challenging Behaviors

Sponsored by

Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders

Tampa, FL — February 15–16, 2002

Edited by

Lyndal M. Bullock
University of North Texas
Denton, Texas

Robert A. Gable
Old Dominion University
Norfolk, Virginia

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About the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders (CCBD)

CCBD is an international organization committed to promoting and facilitating the education and general welfare of children and youth with behavioral or emotional disorders. CCBD, whose members include educators, parents, mental health personnel, and a variety of other professionals, actively pursues quality educational services and program alternatives for persons with behavioral disorders, advocates for the needs of such children and youth, emphasizes research and professional growth as vehicles for better understanding behavioral disorders, and provides professional support for persons who are involved with and serve children and youth with behavioral disorders.

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ISBN 0-86586-973-1

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CONTENTS

Preface / iv

Presentations of Keynote Speakers

Behavior in the Schools: Issues Related to Students with Challenging Behaviors / **1**
Richard Van Acker

Accommodations and Modifications for Students with Challenging Behaviors: Collaborating with General Education / **6**
Michael N. Hazelkorn

Strategic Use of School Personnel: Providing Meaningful Behavioral Supports for Students with Challenging Behaviors and the School Personnel Who Work with Them / **12**
Sister Mary Karen Oudeans

Managing Kids: Direct Answers for Tricky Issues / **19**
Anthony Moriarty

Developing Effective Behavioral Intervention Plans and Positive Behavioral Supports / **24**
Richard Van Acker

Perspectives of Discussion Groups

Proactive Approaches to Working with Challenging Behaviors: Voices from the Field / **32**
Howard S. Muscott, Anthony Menendez, Darlene M. James, and Jody Jackson

Improving School Climate: Moving from "Your Kids" to "Our Kids" / **38**
Karen Barnes, Paula Flint, and Bernie Travnaker

Practicing an Ethos of Care: Laying a Foundation for School-Wide Proactive Approaches / **42**
Teresa L. Teaff and Cathy Kea

The Academic/Behavioral Connection: Working Effectively with Students with Challenging Behaviors / **49**
Beverley H. Johns

Meeting the Needs of Students with Emotional or Behavioral Disorders Through Proactive Approaches / **55**
Mary E. Little

PREFACE

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 1997) contains a number of important provisions that relate to the relationship between academic and nonacademic performance. It includes the stipulation that schools now make use of positive interventions designed to promote more acceptable or appropriate student behavior. This and other disciplinary provisions pose new challenges but also afford new opportunities to better serve students with emotional or behavioral disorders. More than a decade of research has shown that redefining the structure, organization, and culture of the school will help to achieve positive outcomes. Obviously, establishing a school-wide, classroom-level, and pupil-specific set of supports requires an unwavering commitment to making fundamental changes in the way schools operate. It takes a significant amount of time and effort as well. Even so, there is ample evidence that schools can reap tremendous dividends, such as a dramatic decline in the incidence of noncompliant, acting-out behavior, suspensions and expulsions, and special education referrals, and an increase in academic performance.

The Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders (CCBD) recognizes that school personnel need to be better prepared to address the challenges posed by an increasingly diverse student population. For that reason, we sponsored a forum on "School-Wide Proactive Approaches to Working with Students with Challenging Behavior." We designed the forum to bring together parents, teachers, administrators, local and state agency representatives, and others who work with students with challenging behavior. The focus was on ways to make systemic changes in schools. Discussion emphasized ways to create a school environment that supports the use of positive academic and behavioral interventions at the building and classroom levels. It also underscored the importance of academic accommodations and modifications and the benefits that accrue when general educators, special educators, and support personnel collaborate on behalf of students with and without disabilities.

In this monograph, we have attempted to capture the highlights of that forum—both the expert presentations and the deliberations of participants from around the country. On behalf of the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders, we trust that you will find the content useful in seeking ways to address the diverse learning and behavior needs of students with challenging behavior.

Lyndal M. Bullock and Robert A. Gable
Editors

Behavior in the Schools: Issues Related to Students with Challenging Behaviors

Richard Van Acker
University of Illinois at Chicago

Michael sits at his desk dreading the fact that the next activity will involve a spelling bee. He knows he can't spell, and he always feels stupid when he misses the first or second word given. He can feel his stomach beginning to churn. He thinks to himself, "Maybe I should ask the teacher if I can go to the nurse's office." He just knows his morning is going to end as a disaster. At recess the other kids will tease him by misspelling the word he missed and then laugh. Under his breath he whispers, "I hate school!"

Schooling represents a unique experience for children and youth. Children are not invited to attend school; they are compelled to do so. Thus, the public school represents one of the few social contexts in which participation is mandated (prison is another example). Once in school, children must learn to interact with others who are often very different from themselves (e.g., cultural, ethnic, linguistic diversity). They must share adult attention, space, and materials with their peers. These same peers provide or withhold social acceptance and support.

The educational process requires that children publicly perform a variety of tasks and skills that may be beyond the capability of an increasing number of them. Nevertheless, the educational process provides few opportunities for students to decline teacher requests for active participation. For example, most teachers would not provide Michael (in the example above) an opportunity to sit out of the spelling bee because of his lack of skill or confidence; nor would many teachers introduce strategic modifications in the curriculum by adjusting the difficulty of the words presented based upon his skill level. In most classrooms, Michael would be compelled and sometimes coerced into making an effort until such time as he failed and was then allowed to sit down.

What options are available to students who feel uncomfortable with or are unable to perform the academic tasks presented to them? As educators, most of us can provide an extensive list of behaviors that students employ to escape or avoid assigned tasks: Noncompliance, active resistance, verbal or physical disruptions, leaving the instructional area, passive-aggressive behavior, and withdrawal are but a few options. Often the display of noncompliant or disruptive behavior results in the student's being sent from the classroom to another location (e.g., time-out area, the principal's office). In effect, the student is allowed to escape the task, which provides negative reinforcement. At the same time, avoiding the continued stress associated with working with a disruptive student negatively reinforces the teacher through the removal of the annoying student. Over time, many teachers learn to avoid making demands of students who display challenging and disruptive behaviors. In essence, these teachers make a covert, although often unconscious agreement with the student: I won't bother you if you don't bother me" (i.e., disrupt my class). This phenomenon has been termed the *curriculum of noninstruction* (Gunter, Denny, Jack, Shores, & Nelson, 1993; Shores, Gunter, & Jack, 1993).

While efforts to avoid challenging behaviors may allow teachers to get through the day with fewer problems, they do little to address student or teacher learning. In the following discussion, we will explore student behavior and identify some key concepts that must be addressed when attempting to deal effectively with challenging student behaviors.

Understanding the Complexity of Human Behavior

Addressing the educational needs of students who display challenging behaviors is one of the greatest concerns confronting educators today. Unfortunately, many educators have not been appropriately prepared to understand the complex nature of behavior. Most teachers and administrators seek a uniform code of

conduct that provides a given consequence for a given rule violation. For example, when a student uses profanity, the teacher will verbally reprimand the student and deliver a 5-minute time out. However, dealing effectively with challenging behavior sometimes requires more than simply identifying the behavior and then applying a standard intervention.

The same surface behavior may have very different etiologies. Behavior can result from a student's wish to meet a particular desire or need. The student may be using profanity to gain adult attention (reprimand) or to escape a particular situation (time out).[1] Behavior can also be a symptom of a particular disability or cognitive deficit. For example, the student's profanity may represent coprolalia, a tic behavior associated with Tourette syndrome (Robertson & Baron-Cohen, 1998). Often, student behavior simply reflects prior learning or habits that have been developed over time (e.g., profanity is modeled and permitted in the student's home and community). The nature of the intervention required may be quite different in each of these situations. For instance, a teacher's verbal reprimand would likely increase the undesired behavior of a child seeking attention, while time out would allow escape or avoidance. Coprolalia in Tourette syndrome can be decreased, but treatment typically calls for reinforcement of lower rates of the response rather than punishing a student for the disability.

A student's culture also can impact behavior significantly. For example, there are cultural differences in what is expected in various social situations. As a result, social interactions that involve persons from diverse cultures can increase the probability of misinterpretation of behaviors and intentions. Kochman (1981) discussed differences in conversational eye contact between Anglo Americans and African Americans. Anglo Americans typically maintain eye contact when listening and frequently break eye contact when speaking. The pattern is just the opposite for African Americans. These differences in social expectations could lead to serious problems in many situations.

For example, an Anglo-American teacher confronts two students, one African American the other Anglo American, both of whom were involved in a serious school rule violation. During the time the teacher is correcting the students, the Anglo American is looking directly at the teacher, while the African American frequently looks away. When asked to state his side of the situation, the Anglo-American student breaks eye contact when speaking, as expected, whereas the African-American student maintains constant eye contact with the teacher. The teacher may misinterpret the African-American student's behavior as unconcerned when listening and disrespectful or even aggressive when speaking ("He sat there and glared at me as he spoke!"). Based on this misinterpretation, the teacher might impose on the two boys very different consequences for the same offense. The differential treatment of these two students might foster feelings of racial prejudice that further alienate the African-American student.

Knowledge of the Appropriate Behavior: Necessary But Not Sufficient

Many educators fail to consider fully the process of learning when attempting to address challenging student behaviors. The vast majority of our behavior is not the result of deliberate, planned, and discrete cognitive processes; rather, it is the enactment of learned schema that we employ in given situations. That is, through learning, much of our behavior takes on a level of automaticity that allows us to focus on other elements in the environment. Recall when you first learned to write your name in cursive. The formation of the letters required considerable concentration and effort. Do you have to think about signing your name today? This action now takes little effort or forethought; writing your signature has become essentially an automatic response. Much of our behavior is governed in this manner. The neural pathways that govern often-repeated behaviors become structurally supported in such a way that engaging in the behavior requires little thought or effort.

Many of the undesired behaviors displayed by students are similarly automatic in nature. Despite the fact that they are involved in a social problem-solving curriculum, many students will engage in undesired behavior when confronted by a peer (e.g., aggression). A student with a history of aggression who is pushed by a classmate on the playground, for example, is unlikely to step aside and accept that a social problem exists and then identify possible problem-solving alternatives (e.g., ignoring the behavior of being pushed, indicating that he does not like to be pushed, seeking the assistance of an adult). Typically, the student has a learned, automatic solution: If someone pushes you, push him or her back—harder.

Now, if a teacher were to observe the confrontation and ask whether there was any other way the problem could have been addressed, the student would likely be able to provide a number of prosocial alternatives. For many teachers, this response would suggest that the student knew what should have been done but chose to engage in the undesired behavior. Accordingly, it would be reasonable to punish the student because he willfully misbehaved. This is not always the case; the automatic response and the newly learned social cognitive problem-solving skills are controlled by very different

structures in the brain, and retrieval is determined differentially (Carter, 1998). As anyone who has ever attempted to stop smoking or lose weight can attest, knowledge is not behavior. If it were, no one would smoke or be overweight. It follows that the student must be taught the desired behavior and be given the opportunity to successfully practice the new skill with appropriate feedback until this new behavior becomes an automatic response.

A student who has injured his preferred hand will find it difficult to sign his name with his nonpreferred hand despite the fact that he knows how to write his name, but with repeated practice he can learn to write and manipulate objects with his nonpreferred hand. Likewise, a student who engages in a learned undesired behavior can learn a more acceptable alternative behavior with proper instruction and appropriate practice. In that this process takes time, educators must be as patient and purposeful when teaching students desired behavior as when teaching them academic skills.

Prevention of Behavior Problems

We know far more about how to promote student academic success and prevent problems from occurring than about how to have a positive impact on problem behavior once displayed. Educational research reflects a strong and significant correlation between academic problems and behavior problems; they essentially go hand in hand. Improving academic success has repeatedly had a positive impact on student behavior. School success depends upon the effective interaction of the following variables:

- *Student characteristics.* Students enter the school setting with a variety of student-based characteristics (e.g., cultural beliefs, attitudes, abilities).
- *Teacher behavior/instructional practices.* Teachers demonstrate a variety of personal and professional characteristics (e.g., cultural beliefs, instructional skills, interpersonal skills) that impact student behavior.
- *Curriculum.* If the curriculum is too difficult, the student may fail to master critical skills; if it is too easy, the student becomes bored.

When there is a mismatch between two or more of these variables, there is an increased risk for student failure. Thus, any attempt to address student behavior should include some exploration of other variables such as teacher behavior, the nature of the instructional task, and even peer behavior. Attempts to change student behavior without efforts to alter the social context in ways that will support the desired behavior change are likely doomed to failure (Tolan & Guerra, 1994).

Punitive Approaches to Behavior Change

Most school-based efforts to address challenging student behaviors rely heavily upon punishment and the application of punitive consequences for undesired behaviors (Sugai, Kame'enui, & Colvin, 1993). While these strategies may work for a large number of students, for others the use of punishment simply exacerbates the problem. The most challenging students in the school are unlikely to be punished into desired behavior. Efforts to change these students' behavior will require interventions that "trap" them into academic and social success while making their undesired behaviors less effective in meeting their needs. The implementation of this "trap" requires:

- *A wide opening to attract the individual.* This involves the teacher's providing the student with frequent opportunities to respond academically. The response opportunities should be designed to maximize the student's success. That is, given the student's ability, he or she should have an 85% or greater chance at providing a correct response.
- *"Bait."* The lesson should address and promote the student's ability to meet needs similar to those met by the undesired behavior (e.g., attention, power and control, peer affiliation). For example, if a student engages in disruptive behavior to gain peer acceptance, the lesson could be designed to provide peer interaction and attention. If power and control is an issue for the student, the lesson can provide choice and leadership opportunities.
- *A "spring" or "catch."* A trap requires something to hold the individual within it. The catch for most students will involve success, competence, and an improved relationship with a caring adult.

Few students who are actively provided with opportunities to be academically competent and who experience academic success engage in disruptive behavior.

Teachers should take the time to recognize the capabilities and limitations of their students. Lesson plans should be reviewed prior to implementation to ensure that accommodations have been made that will provide ample opportunity for all students to meet with academic success. Students who are at an increased level of risk for academic failure or who pose the greatest risk for the display of challenging behaviors should be engaged proactively. That is, teachers should make every effort to engage these students in positive inter-

actions at the start of each class. Successful teachers routinely greet these students socially as they enter the classroom. They provide them with opportunities to respond early in the activity and involve them throughout the lesson. Opportunities to respond should be delivered strategically (specifically selected with the target student's ability in mind) to ensure an 85% to 90% chance of correct responding. Too often the first interaction a teacher has with these at-risk students is a negative one. These negative interactions tend to push the student away rather than draw them into the lesson.

Addressing Undesired Behaviors

Despite proactive, positive strategies, some students will display problem behaviors. Addressing these undesired behaviors as errors in social learning that require instructional remediation will typically surpass traditional disciplinary approaches based solely on punishment. All too often, educators respond to problem behaviors in ways they would never think of using when addressing academic errors:

- *Ignoring errors.* When attempting to teach a given concept or skill, teachers seldom ignore errors in the display of that concept or skill. For example, if teaching the capitals of the 50 United States, a teacher would not ignore a student's response that identified Chicago as the capital of Illinois.
- *Warnings as a consequence.* Likewise, an effective teacher does not provide a warning as a consequence[2] for an error. "Chicago is not the capital of Illinois. I won't mark it wrong this time, but if you make this error again I will have to mark it wrong."
- *Rapid escalation of a consequence.* One of the most troubling practices often applied to undesired behavior involves rapid escalation in the nature of the consequence. Try to imagine a teacher addressing a student's academic error this way: "Michael, Chicago is not the capital of Illinois. I am going to have to mark this wrong. Moreover, if you make this error again, I'm going to take off 2 points. If you repeat the error a third time, I will remove 10 points, and if you make the error after that I will have to remove you from social studies!"

If these approaches are so effective at altering behavior, why do we not employ them to address academic errors? We do not employ these strategies because they are neither appropriate nor particularly effective—nor are they appropriate for addressing social behavior.

When possible, the consequences imposed by school personnel in response to student undesired behaviors should serve to teach appropriate alternative behaviors and/or allow students to practice these new alternative behaviors. An increasing number of schools have begun to adopt instructional or pedagogical consequences for undesired behaviors. These consequences involve the student in a learning task or the active display of an alternative behavior as the direct consequence of a rule violation. For example, instead of a 3-day suspension for fighting, a student might more appropriately be required to participate in an intensive 3-day anger management program. Schools are working with their communities (e.g., mental health providers, police) to develop and deliver these types of programs. In some states, the money saved by not suspending the students (i.e., through loss of Average Daily Attendance funds) helps to defray the cost of these alternative programs.

Instructional or pedagogical consequences provide three very important benefits related to school discipline policies:

1. They employ sound instructional strategies that have been empirically validated to increase knowledge and skills.
2. They call upon the pedagogical knowledge of learning that teachers already have (related to academics) and apply it to learning. Thus, teachers have the base knowledge.
3. They serve to educate and support alternative desired behaviors, not just punish undesired behaviors. Thus, they are much more appropriate when addressing behavior problems that might involve culture- or disability-related etiologies. School personnel are not punishing the child for the behavior per se; rather, they are providing an opportunity for the student to learn the appropriate desired school-based behavior.

Conclusion

By all accounts, problem behavior is a fact of life in our schools. There is increasing recognition that education personnel must come to understand the nature of challenging behavior. We must accept that student behavior is often complex and multiply determined; no single variable (e.g., parenting) explains or even determines the occurrence of a particular behavior. For that reason, our efforts to respond to problem behaviors will vary depending on a number of different factors (e.g., student strengths and weaknesses, task demands, peer supports, outside influences). There is no simple "cookbook" response that is likely to be effective. In the end, we must learn to apply to the social/behavioral learning errors of students the same thinking that goes into

seeking to understand and then develop a plan to remediate their academic learning errors.

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Endnotes

1. Learned behaviors often meet specific needs or desires of the individual, such as the needs for attention, power, or control; to escape or avoid an undesired activity; to attain peer affiliation; tangible rewards; and to seek justice or revenge (Neel & Cessna, 1993). A functional assessment of behavior is a procedure that can be employed to help identify the function a specific target behavior serves for a student and to identify context variables that serve to occasion or maintain the behavior (Gable, Quinn, Rutherford, Howell, & Hoffman, 1998).
2. If you feel the student requires a warning to cue appropriate behavior, provide the warning prior to the display of undesired behavior (e.g., "Michael, we are going to walk to the restroom. Remember we do not talk in the hallway").

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Accommodations and Modifications for Students with Challenging Behaviors: Collaborating with General Education

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Inclusion

Today, there is a substantial amount of attention directed toward giving all students with disabilities, mild to severe, the opportunity to belong and participate with their general education peers. For many of these students, this movement affords academic and nonacademic opportunities not otherwise available. Yet integrating students with emotional or behavioral disorders (E/BD) into general education settings remains one of the greatest challenges to our profession. Both research and experience demonstrate that these students are the most difficult to include in general education. They are the first students asked to leave the classroom and the last students invited to return (Cheney & Muscott, 1996).

The inclusion of students with disabilities in general education has gone through many stages, with many terms being used to describe classroom placement. During the mid 1980s, discussion focused on merging special education and general education (Will, 1986). This movement became known as the *regular education initiative* (REI). In the 1990s, the concept of integrating students with disabilities became known as *inclusion* or the *full inclusion movement*. Full inclusion is a concept that promotes the elimination of special education classrooms. The underlying principle is that all children can be taught in general education classrooms if they are provided appropriate supports and services. Those who advocate for inclusion believe that students with disabilities should be integrated into general education classrooms and should be full members of those classrooms, whether or not they meet the traditional curricular standards.

If inclusion is about "educational access, equity, and quality for all students" (Giangreco, Cloninger, & Iverson, 1998, p. 8), then why is it so controversial, especially for students with E/BD? One reason is that students with E/BD pose major challenges to the current inclusion movement's objectives—in particular, the ability of the general education environment to adequately teach and shape prosocial behavior (Lewis, Chard, & Scott, 1994). Across time, inclusion has moved from "mainstreaming" students with disabilities without specially designed instruction after they were judged capable of keeping up to placing students into general education classrooms even if they are not ready to perform successfully. We have moved from a "full continuum of services, the blueprint for special education during the last thirty years . . .[to] a philosophy of full inclusion" (Cheney & Muscott, 1996, p. 109). Accordingly, students with E/BD are being included in general education classrooms despite the lack of research to support such placements (Gibb, Allred, Ingram, Young, & Egan, 1999; Schneider & Leroux, 1994; Stout, 1996) and, in some cases, without the support of their parents (Palmer, Fuller, Arora, & Nelson, 2001). Many educators have chosen to define inclusion as a "point on the continuum of educational services," rather than a "philosophical position, attitude, and value statement" (Guetzloe, 1999, p. 93). Others assert that inclusion should be something we believe, not something we do; I fully support that view.

Basic Premises

We know that most attempts to integrate students with E/BD into general education classrooms have not been successful. One reason is that too few teachers have the ability to respond to deviant problems and, in most cases, respond in ways that exacerbate the problem (e.g., Heflin & Bullock, 1999; Long & Kelly, 1994). As Sugai and Horner (1994) have pointed out, if this is to change, we need administrators, teachers, and support staff who have the knowledge, skills, and experience to work effectively with students with challenging behaviors. Teachers must be more in control of their classes so that they will have more time for instruction before

they are likely to accept troubled students into their classrooms (Long, 1994).

If students with E/BD are to be successfully included in general education classrooms, then the premises upon which integration is based must be clear. The first premise is that inclusion was not designed to take services from students without disabilities in general education settings. A second premise is that *all* students can benefit from individualized expectations. A third premise is that inclusion was based on the understanding that it is a team process, one that includes frequent interaction between general and special educators and school personnel working as teammates and partners (Cheney & Muscott, 1996).

The 1997 Amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (PL 105-17) stipulated that there should be high expectations for students with disabilities and they should be involved in and be able to make progress toward goals relative to the general education curriculum. Yet inclusion should not result in a decline in direct special education services in segregated settings or increased academic and nonacademic programming by general educators (Sugai & Horner, 1994). For the most part, the courts have upheld decisions for inclusive placements in the student's home school (*Daniel R. R. v. State Board of Education, El Paso* [1989]; *Greer v. Rome City School District* [1991]; *Oberti v. Board of Education of the Borough of Clementon School District* [1993]; *Sacramento City Unified School District v. Rachel H.* [1994]). Other decisions have supported exclusion (e.g., *Chris D. v. Montgomery County Board of Education* [1990]; *Clyde K. and Sheila K. v. Puyallup School District* [1994]; *Geiss v. Parsippany-Troy Hills Board of Education* [1985]). In all, both federal legislation and judicial decisions offer support to the inclusion movement; however, the question remains: Are current educational practices conducive to including students with E/BD?

Barriers to Inclusion

If we are to integrate students with E/BD in general education classrooms, we must recognize that many current practices prevent successful inclusion. Some reform efforts stem from the fact that many see a decline in the quality of public schools that is damaging the future of our children. Others believe that colleges are spending too much time providing remedial education rather than higher education. In addition, there is the general sense that workers lack basic skills necessary to be productive in the workplace. As a result, there is a national movement for higher academic standards and greater educational accountability in schools.

Another possible barrier relates to teacher preparation. Most general education teachers do not possess the knowledge, expertise, and experience to use intervention techniques (e.g., modeling, self-control, social skills instruction) shown to be effective with students with E/BD (Shapiro, Miller, Sawka, Gardill, & Handler, 1999). In addition, the school-age population is more diverse than in the past. Schools are serving students who have special education needs; have limited English proficiency; are hungry, abused, unsupervised, suicidal, pregnant, violent, at risk, or bisexual; or are on drugs.

Not surprisingly, many believe that schools are spending too much time keeping basic order in the classroom, which undermines the real business of schooling—namely, for teachers to teach and students to learn. As a response to what is perceived as a lack of discipline, schools have moved to a policy of "zero tolerance." Viewed together, these movements pose serious challenges to educators who work with students with serious behavior problems (Sugai & Horner, 1994).

Conditions for Inclusion

If students with E/BD are to be successful in general education environments, then the conditions must be conducive to their success. If students do not feel like they belong, they will not want to learn. If they do feel like they belong, they are more likely to work to be successful (Ellis, Hart, & Small-McGinley, 1998). Even so, inclusion transcends the classroom. School administrators play a critical role in creating and promoting a climate that is supportive of inclusion. They provide the vision. They initiate the ideas and provide the support. They must be proactive, visible, and committed to responding positively to students with diverse learning and behavioral needs. In an era of high-stakes testing and increased educational accountability, that is no simple undertaking.

Teachers are the other part of the equation needed for successful inclusion. First and foremost, general education teachers must agree to participate in that process. They must foster a climate of nurturance and respect. A teacher who demonstrates respect for students is likely to gain much more cooperation and goodwill from the students. Indeed, students have asserted that if they didn't feel respected by the teacher, they wouldn't do anything in class (Ellis et al., 1998).

Teachers must know how to establish clear student expectations. In many cases, students need to be taught those expectations systematically and situationally. Teachers must have a solid grasp of the basic principles of classroom management and how to avoid power struggles with their students. Given all that we know about problems inside and outside the classroom, teachers must know how and be willing to support students in conflict. Lower caseloads, adequate resources,

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and ongoing staff development are critical to accomplishing these goals.

Teacher Skills

A few years ago, Johnson (1999) singled out a number of skills that teachers need if students are to be integrated successfully in inclusive environments. For example, teachers need to be able to use multilevel instruction—instruction in which the lesson contains varying expectations and the content is aligned with the students' skill levels. Teachers must be able to use activity-based and experiential learning in which students engage in discovery, movement, interaction with the environment, and manipulation of materials. Students who are actively engaged in instruction aligned with their interests and abilities learn and behave better.

Student-directed learning is another technique for increasing motivation, interest, and self-esteem. In student-directed learning, students express their interests and help to make decisions about various aspects of the content of the curriculum. Furthermore, individual, small-group, or class-wide peer tutoring has been successful in inclusive classrooms as students have an opportunity to develop patience, creativity, empathy, and perseverance along with specific academic skills.

Another technique that encourages students to work together is cooperative learning. For many teachers, cooperative learning has become a core strategy for successful group-individual instruction. Cooperative learning affords teachers a way to capitalize on student strengths academically and behaviorally. The jigsaw strategy, in which each student becomes an expert in some area and teaches the others, and the group project strategy, in which students combine their knowledge to create a project or assignment, are but two examples of how teachers can accommodate a heterogeneous class.

Considerations for Participation

If the school-wide and classroom conditions are right and the teachers have the necessary skills and support, then many students can be placed in inclusive environments. As always, placement decisions should be individualized and needs based. Decisions regarding the curriculum and supports should be group-individualized and needs based as well. Sufficient supports must be in place to meet the students' diverse learning and behavioral needs. Supports should be in place before student placement occurs. Finally, the placement should not be viewed as an educational objective, but as a means to reaching specific educational ends (Lewis et al., 1994).

Accommodations

Accommodations and modifications relate to services, teaching strategies, and changes or modifications in learning environments to enable students to perform successfully. Many of the accommodations discussed here are commonly found in the classroom. However, the mere fact that a modification is typical does not mean it is effective. Finding effective accommodations is more than finding the right list. The "accommodations are most effective when general and special education teachers design them as an integrated part of the curriculum" ("Effective Accommodations," 1997, p. 1). This involves advance planning, routine assessment of student strengths, careful consideration of resources, and planning time ("Effective Accommodations," 1997). The key to making student accommodations is to select from among a range of options one or more that, within a reasonable amount of time and with a reasonable amount of effort, are likely to produce the most gains for the largest number of students ("Effective Accommodations," 1997).

Lesson Presentation

Lessons need to be structured so that students are actively engaged and motivated to learn. The content and anticipated outcomes of the lesson should dictate the teaching approach. Teachers will be most effective if they use a multisensory approach to instruction. A variety of activities (e.g., large-group instruction, small cooperative group work, individual assignments, learning centers, physical movement, discussion) will help to engage students. Other techniques include reviewing previous lessons; using advance organizers; setting clear learning and behavioral expectations; simplifying directions; providing written outlines; writing key points on the board, overhead, or PowerPoint; emphasizing critical information; presenting demonstrations or visual aids; using finished products as permanent models; taping lectures for replay; and using manipulatives for instruction.

Materials

The use of different or modified instructional materials may help students to succeed in general education classrooms. For example, taped texts can help students who have difficulty reading. Color-coded texts or materials or highlighted (or underlined) textual material will enable students to focus on what they need to know. Study guides also are an excellent way to help students focus on relevant aspects of instruction. Finally, note-taking assistance (e.g., printed copies, cloze copy forms) allows the students to focus on the lesson rather than the task of writing notes.

Motivation

There is ample empirical evidence that students who are motivated by the teacher or the curriculum are less apt to act out in class. Even so, we recognize that it is essential to develop positive relationships with students based on mutual respect so that students can become invested in the teaching/learning process. Teachers can promote this by allowing students some decision in what they will learn. Another way to increase students' motivation is to concentrate on their strengths and encourage them to actively participate by asking questions or assigning activities that ensure success. It is important to reinforce and reward appropriate participation. Successful teachers are aware of potentially frustrating situations and ignore inappropriate behavior as much as possible. In sum, they use effective, relevant, motivating instruction.

Level of Support

Increasing the amount of personal assistance for students with E/BD will increase their chances of success in the general education classroom. This can be accomplished in various ways, including team teaching and the strategic use of competent classmates. One way to increase personal assistance is to seat the student near someone who will be helpful and understanding or to assign the student a partner. Peers can be taught to monitor and/or redirect inappropriate behavior. The teacher can stand near the student when giving directions or presenting a lesson. If necessary, paraprofessional can be assigned to assist the student.

Setting/Room Arrangements

The daily routine and schedule, as well as class rules and expectations, should be directly taught to all students and be posted in a prominent place in the classroom. Although the schedule should be consistent, it should be changed to accommodate students if it is not working. Distractions should be reduced or minimized as much as possible. Preferential seating can be given to selected students (e.g., proximity to adults, competent peers, removal from distractions and potentially dangerous areas). A place for quiet time would be helpful for many students. As Guetzloe (1999) stated, "there will always be a need for a 'safe place' within the school" (p. 5).

Assignments

Assignments can be given in small, distinct steps. Students can be allowed to copy from a paper or book. The difficulty level of the assignment can be adjusted in various ways: Adapting the number of items needed for completion can shorten the assignment. Written directions can be read to students. Oral cues and prompts can be provided. Finally, students can each be given an assignment notebook and daily or weekly checklists or graphs on which to record completed work.

Homework

Different techniques are available to increase student homework completion. Teachers can accept verbal responses, rather than written responses. Other students can be allowed to tape their responses or dictate them to peers. Teachers can reduce the number of questions or problems. Peer tutoring or extra help sessions can be offered. In addition, teachers can provide an example of a completed question at the top of each homework assignment for students to refer to as they complete their homework. At the end of class, teachers should restate the assignment to be completed that evening, have one or more students repeat the main points of the assignment, and answer student questions about their responsibilities.

Alternatives to Testing and Grading

Rather than giving the typical pencil/paper tests, teachers can accommodate the needs of students by assessing skills in different ways. For instance, students can give oral reports, poster presentations, or classroom demonstrations as evidence of content mastery. Students also can demonstrate proficiency by audio taping the answers. When testing, teachers should rely on evaluation procedures that help the student to build skills over time and choose procedures that are most authentic and relevant to the student's current and future needs.

Instead of the traditional letter grades, a pass/fail system with "honor," "high pass," and "pass" can be used. Individualized education programs or contract grading are acceptable alternatives. Portfolio summaries and work samples with rubrics have been used successfully in inclusive classrooms.

Organization

Students who are organized stand a better chance of succeeding in general education classrooms. As I mentioned previously, students should be directly taught and routinely supported (and reinforced) to use assignment sheets, notebooks, or monthly calendars. Many teachers demonstrate ways for students to organize their notebooks or provide folders to help them organize their work. Finally, teachers help students set timelines for completion of long assignments and/or ask students to complete smaller portions of the assignment.

Support Personnel

The inclusion of students with E/BD is unlikely to succeed if the necessary support is not provided to both students and teachers. Consultative support is an essential element for inclusion (Gibb et al., 1999; Shapiro et al., 1994), as are well-trained teachers (Lewis et al., 1994). Accordingly the role of special education teachers (and/or paraprofessionals) needs to be clearly understood by all participants.

Leadership

Building-level administrative leadership that can shape the attitudes of teachers and parents is critical to successful inclusion (Lewis et al., 1994). The leadership must be visionary as well as practical in nature. Finally, administrators must ensure that technical assistance and professional development are available to facilitate the inclusion process.

Curriculum

Students with E/BD need appropriate instruction in a curriculum that is not substantially less than that received by students without E/BD. Edgar (1987) described the problem relating to the curriculum as a dilemma with "two equally appalling alternatives, integrated mainstreaming in a nonfunctional curriculum which results in horrendous outcomes (few jobs, high dropout rate) or separate, segregated programs for an already devalued group, a repugnant thought in our democratic society" (p. 560). If students with E/BD are to succeed in school and beyond, they need social skills instruction (Lewis et al., 1999) and vocational education that is aligned with the demands of specific jobs (Heflin & Bullock, 1999). Students who have E/BD need an individually tailored program that uses the continuum of service options (Heflin & Bullock, 1999).

Conclusion

Is inclusion best for all students with challenging behaviors? Will it be enough to restructure the general education classroom? Will it be enough to make reasonable accommodations? The answers to these questions lie ahead. Including students with E/BD in general education classrooms is more than just making reasonable accommodations. Inclusion is a powerful educational philosophy. If inclusion is to work, the culture of most schools (i.e., the attitudes, the beliefs, the values, and the traditions) must change dramatically. Educators must be valued, supported, intellectually stimulated, and celebrated. Most would agree that we have a long way to go.

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Strategic Use of School Personnel: Providing Meaningful Behavioral Supports for Students with Challenging Behaviors and the School Personnel Who Work with Them

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Systems Approaches for Behavioral Support

Today we are witnessing the emergence of two systems approaches for working with students with emotional or behavioral disorders (E/BD). These approaches are (a) positive behavior intervention supports (PBIS) and (b) school-based wraparound planning. Both represent a fundamental change in the way we view behavior problems in the context of the total school milieu. A change in perspective also means changes in how faculty, staff, and administrators respond to students with E/BD.

Positive Behavior Intervention Supports

The PBIS approach is a proactive systems approach for preventing and responding to classroom and school discipline problems. This approach includes both a school-wide and an individual behavior support focus (Lewis & Sugai, 1999). Emphasis is on developing and maintaining safe learning environments in which teachers can teach and students can learn. According to Todd, Horner, Sugai, and Sprague (1999), effective behavior support in the schools must address different patterns of behavior that occur in classroom and nonclassroom settings. Effective supports are not a patchwork of reactive behavior management plans developed incident by incident or student by student; rather, PBIS is an integrated, proactive approach to addressing the diverse learning and behavioral needs of all students.

Over nearly 15 years, effective behavior supports have been developed and refined to help school personnel build their capacity to successfully educate all students—including students with challenging behaviors. This approach is being implemented and evaluated in a growing number of states, including Oregon, Hawaii, Illinois, Kansas, and Missouri, as well as the province of British Columbia (e.g., Lewis & Sugai, 1999; Nakasato, 2000; Sadler, 2000).

School-Wide Behavior Support. Efforts to build school-wide behavior support are gaining momentum, as schools seek to respond to the 1998 White House mandate to make our schools violence-free environments (Dwyer, Osher, & Warger, 1998). The primary purpose of a school-wide discipline model is to provide guidance and support to students in the general school milieu in both classroom and nonclassroom environments. School-wide systems approaches have become a priority in schools across the country.

In implementing a school-wide model, all students, faculty and staff, administrators, and parent volunteers actively participate in the training necessary to put PBIS into practice. Personnel are taught to define school goals and expectations. Since the success of school-wide programs depends on consistent program implementation, those expectations are spelled out clearly in observable and measurable terms. School personnel are taught to provide students with positive feedback for meeting expectations and to apply corrective feedback and negative consequences for violations of school expectations.

Those schools that have developed and implemented school-wide systems report a dramatic transformation of the overall school culture. Schools are transformed from a negative and reactive environment, in which teachers write up office referrals for behavior infractions and the students who are most at risk often are suspended or expelled from school, to a positive, proac-

tive environment in which all students are reinforced for meeting school expectations and teachers engage in proactive problem solving with students and each other (e.g., Horner & Sugai, 2000; Lohrmann-O'Rourke, Knoster, Sabatine, Smith, Horvath, & Llewellyn, 2000; Taylor-Greene & Kartub, 2000; Walker, Colvin, & Ramsey, 1995). Schools and districts that claim success in building safe environments through school-wide systems for effective behavioral support found that systematic, direct instruction on appropriate behavior is not just for students who demonstrate problems, but for all students (e.g., Colvin, Sugai, & Patching, 1993).

Individualized Behavior Supports. According to Taylor-Greene, Brown, Nelson, Longton, Gassman, Cohen, and colleagues (cited in Todd, Horner, Sugai, & Colvin, 1999), 3% to 7% of the student population in elementary or middle schools engage in chronic misbehaviors that do not respond to existing school-wide systems. These students require additional resources and more individualized behavior support than the majority of the students involved in the school-wide system.

The 1997 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA '97) mandates that schools make use of positive behavior programming for students with disabilities. Consistent with the notion of group-individual positive behavior support, the purpose of that mandate is to take a proactive view of challenging behavior that includes teaching students replacement behaviors that serve the same purpose as the problem behavior and, in turn, increase the possibilities for success in school and postschool life. Positive behavior supports consist of a multitiered approach to group–individual needs that not only substantially diminishes discipline-related problems, but also increases academic outcomes for all students.

School-Based Wraparound Planning

A second system approach, school-based wraparound planning, is an approach for developing effective individualized plans for students who need more than school-wide (i.e., universal) or targeted, school-only interventions. Originally, the wraparound process was designed and implemented as an initiative within the National Institute of Mental Health as a *system of care* model. Simply put, a system of care is a community-based approach to providing students with comprehensive, integrated services that are available through multiple agencies and professionals in collaboration with families (Eber, Nelson, & Miles, 1997).

According to Eber and colleagues (1997), as schools establish and implement effective school-wide and individualized behavior supports, school-based wraparound planning appears to be the next logical step to assisting students with chronic and severe behavior challenges. These are the students who need more support in the form of an individualized comprehensive plan that encompasses home, school, and community. Since the eligibility criteria for the E/BD classification require severe, chronic, and frequent behaviors manifested in home, school, and community contexts, the wraparound approach appears to be an effective way to create the ownership and clarity that is necessary to improve outcomes for students and their families and teachers.

Sameness Analysis: Best Practice

In analyzing the "sameness" threads that weave through these two approaches to serving students with E/BD, several common themes emerge. First, both approaches focus on the processes and skills that facilitate systems change. Second, capacity building to support systems change is a high priority. Third, both approaches utilize team members' strengths, prioritize stakeholder needs, and rely on the use of proven strategies that result in positive outcomes that are determined by team members.

Both PBIS and wraparound planning represent best practices for school personnel to provide meaningful support to students with challenging behaviors and all those who work with these students. Since PBIS and wraparound planning are not add-on curricula, packages, or commercially produced programs, their development and implementation require training in processes such as effective team behavior (e.g., team-based planning and problem-solving skills) as well as specific group-individual interventions and program evaluation options. Given that changes in philosophy and practice are fundamental to the success of these approaches, active administrative leadership and ongoing staff commitment are essential. In addition, training and technical assistance for key stakeholders as they develop and implement intervention effects are vital to establishing and maintaining meaningful classroom, school-wide, and community support.

Supporting System Change

Both research and experience have shown that school-wide behavior supports and school-based wraparound planning practices are only as good as the systems that support the adults who use these practices (e.g., Eber et al., 1997). Three elements of successful development and implementation have been identified. These include (a) active participation of all team members, (b) dissemination of plans, and (c) systematic and sustained instruction and coaching in the teaming

processes and the behavior competence skills for implementing the programs.

First, it is essential to facilitate active participation of all school personnel. Teams must recognize the significance of the skills and perspectives classroom teachers, education assistants, and other school personnel bring to the teaming process by asking them what they need, validating their concerns, building on their strengths, and brainstorming new strategies with which to redefine the structure and culture of the school.

Second, results of team planning sessions must be disseminated to all key stakeholders in the professional education community—the students, teachers, and staff—as well as family members. Everyone working with the student must have full knowledge of the plan and what their roles and responsibilities are in implementing it.

Finally, research underscores how important it is to directly and systematically train and provide follow-up technical assistance to those responsible for applying intervention strategies designed to produce positive outcomes for students with E/BD (Colvin, Ainge, & Nelson, 1997; Eber et al., 1997; Scott & Nelson, 1999; Walker et al., 1995). Teaching the behavior competence skills and providing ongoing instruction and coaching support as teams implement the behavior plans is essential to achieving successful outcomes.

While schools report that training and support are being offered, some teachers and other school personnel acknowledge that they do not feel adequately prepared to work with students who exhibit challenging behaviors. Perceived competence in working with these students is as important as actual support and technical assistance in the development and implementation of systems approaches to challenging behaviors. As Henry Ford said, those who think they can and those who think they can't are both right. It follows that building the capacity for schools to change must be a major priority to which education and community personnel dedicate themselves across time.

Building the Capacity for Change

Today, students who exhibit challenging behaviors are no longer the sole responsibility of specialists such as school psychologists and teachers of students with E/BD. Even so, these school professionals often bring a significant knowledge and skill base to program planning and implementation for students who do not respond to universal, school-wide discipline programs (Eber et al., 1997; Scott & Nelson, 1999; Todd, Horner, Sugai, & Colvin, 1999). So a key question is: What are the attitudes and actions that change agents and key team members need to focus on during the team meeting and ultimately communicate to all school personnel?

Charting the Course for Change

At the risk of oversimplifying system change and in an attempt to narrow the focus of our discussion, I suggest that we consider the "3 A's" that will contribute significantly to system change: Attitude, Awareness, and Action.

Change in Attitude

Those who are able to effect positive system change report that traditional reactive responses must be replaced by proactive instruction in dealing with challenging behaviors.

Reactive Responses. Teachers often use a reactive framework when confronted with challenging student behaviors. A teacher who views student misbehavior from a reactive perspective often makes assumptions about the student and his or her misbehavior that follows this pattern. First, when the behavior occurs, the teacher assumes the student is not trying to do the expected behavior or that the student knows the correct behavior and is refusing to cooperate. Accordingly, the teacher employs a series of negative consequences that send an "I get tough" and if that doesn't work, an "I get tougher" message to the student. Negative consequences include clamping down, reviewing again and again the rules and consequences, extending the continuum of negative consequences, improving the consistency of negative consequences, and finally establishing the bottom line, which is stated as "or else."

Second, in a reactive framework, withdrawal of the student from the context in which the behavior occurs (e.g., no recess, office referral, detentions) is often the consequence of choice. While no practice in the expected behavior is provided, the assumption of teachers and school systems is that after experiencing a series of more severe negative consequences, a student will "learn a lesson" and behave more appropriately the next time (Colvin et al., 1993; Walker et al., 1995). Finally, when this series of negative consequences doesn't produce the expected behaviors, school personnel are likely to get tougher by implementing even more punitive practice resulting in exclusionary options (e.g., suspensions, expulsion) as a way to deal with severe and chronic behavior challenges.

A Proactive Instructional Focus. If students fail to learn an academic skill, teachers assess pupil performance in an effort to pinpoint the learning error, reteach the

skill, and provide the student with additional practice opportunities to build fluency. A similar proactive instructional approach can be applied to challenging behaviors and is the focal point of PBIS and wrap-around planning.

Proactive steps for addressing challenging behaviors include the following:

1. Identifying the purpose of the behaviors through a functional behavioral assessment.
2. Identifying the expected or acceptable behaviors and actively teaching those behaviors.
3. Modifying the environment to support practice of expected behaviors.
4. Providing differential reinforcement.
5. Teaching generalization of the expected behaviors to other environments.
6. Introducing specific strategies to promote the maintenance of acceptable behaviors.

I recognize that these are not simple procedures, but they can unlock doors for students with challenging behaviors by providing a framework of meaningful instructional practices and supports.

Heightened Awareness

According to Daniels (1998), effective use of verbal (and nonverbal) feedback in the learning paradigm is too often neglected. Teachers and school personnel are unaware of the power of language when interacting with students who present challenging behaviors and thus underestimate its importance. For example, when a teacher expects a student to follow a direction or respond to a request and anticipates a problem with the student, the language the teacher uses can provide feedback about what the expected behavior should "look like" and/or "sound like." Even when negative consequences are necessary following an unacceptable behavior, the language the teacher uses can provide information about why the student's behavior did not meet the expectation.

Likewise, school personnel must be skilled in regulating verbal and/or nonverbal interactions they have with students who are on the brink of exhibiting confrontational behavior. They can either defuse the behavior before it occurs or respond to the behavior in ways that could readily escalate it to more serious levels that threaten the safety of both staff and students. It follows that administrators, faculty, and staff all must be aware of the impact of their behavior on students.

Purposeful Action

Simply moving from a reactive to a proactive perspective and developing a heightened awareness of faculty and staff behavior are not enough to support system change without purposeful action. Purposeful action on the part of school personnel hinges on a commitment to high-quality faculty and staff training and technical assistance. Teaching school personnel proactive strategies and methods that prevent challenging behavior and defuse and deescalate potentially explosive behavior is essential. As school personnel become more competent and confident in using these strategies and methods, the school's capacity for system change will grow and become stronger and more sustainable.

Taking Preventive Actions. First, team members must explore difficult questions. Could the students' inappropriate and unacceptable behavior be the result of an inappropriate curriculum or ineffective instruction (Daniels, 1998; Scott & Nelson, 1999; Zirpoli & Melloy, 2001)? The connection between classroom instruction and student behavior is well established (Englemann, Becker, Carnine, & Gersten, 1988; Kame'enui & Darch, 1995; Nelson, 1996). For example, sometimes student misbehavior is a cover-up for an inability to meet academic expectations or a healthy response to boredom in the classroom. A student may be bored because she or he has already learned the material, the pace is too slow, or the instructional delivery is poor. Finally, the student may perceive the material to be irrelevant or culturally nonfunctional for his or her needs or interests.

Second, schools must teach school personnel to harness the power of precorrection. Precorrection, as a proactive instructional method, includes a specific statement designed to prompt or cue the occurrence of an expected, appropriate behavior (Colvin et al., 1993; Scott & Nelson, 1999; Walker et al., 1995). In a precorrective statement, the teacher states the key rule(s) or expectation and the associated positive or negative consequences. For example, "When I'm working with this group, all of you need to complete your work so we can go to recess on time."

Precorrection as a proactive instructional management strategy has several benefits for both students and school personnel. First, it provides systematic support for desired behavior. Using precorrection increases the likelihood that appropriate behavior will occur and lessens the need for negative contingencies. Second, it gives students who may need additional prompts, cues, or supports a "heads-up" regarding behavioral expectations before the behavior occurs. In many instances, it involves direct instruction of the expected behavior. Finally, precorrection draws upon the instructional skills staff members already apply to academic prob-

Precorrection Checklist and Plan	Sample Plan for: J. Sporty Teacher: Mr. Coach Date: 12/2/ __
☐ **Context.** Identify the context. Pinpoint where the behavior is occurring.	Students play games during recess that require turn taking.
☐ **Predictable behavior.** Identify the inappropriate behavior that is occurring within the context	J. runs out the door at recess to line up and have his turn first. If not first, J. pushes to head of line and tries to take ball.
☐ **Expected behavior.** Clearly specify the expected replacement behavior(s). (What does the behavior "look like" or "sound like"?)	Walk out the door to the play area and take his place in line with no pushing if he is not first.
☐ **Context modification.** Modifications can include instruction, tasks, explanations, seating arrangements, scheduling, etc.	Teacher will walk with J. to the recess door, reminding J. that he must walk to the game area and take place in line without pushing to be first in the game.
☐ **Behavioral rehearsal.** Present the student with training on the expected behaviors before the student enters the target context.	Just before announcing recess the teacher asks J. to tell what he must do when he goes out the door for recess. J. practices the behavior while going to recess.
☐ **Strong reinforcement.** The replacement behavior must be strongly reinforced (initially, then fade).	Teacher tells J. he can have his turn first the next day if he remembers to walk to the game area and take his place and turn in the game without pushing to be first in line. Teacher also provides specific verbal praise when J. comes in from recess.
☐ **Prompt expected behavior.** Acknowledge appropriate behavior, state expectations during activities, and present the consequences as a decision for the student to make.	Teacher walks with J. to the door of the play area. Reminds J. to walk to the play area and take his place and wait for his turn.
☐ **Monitor the plan.** Use the checklist and plan as form of progress report.	Count the number of times J. walks to the play area and takes his place in line to wait for his turn.

Note. Adapted from Colvin, G., Sugai, G., & Patching, B. (1993). Precorrection: An instructional approach for managing predictable problem behaviors. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 28*(3), 143–150.

Figure 1. Sample Precorrection Plan

lems and teaches the staff to use the same skills to manage behavior problems.

The PBIS team also can develop an individualized precorrection plan as a positive behavior intervention support for a student with chronic and predictable behaviors and use it in the context(s) in which the misbehavior typically occurs (e.g., classroom, hallway, cafeteria). To be effective, a precorrection plan must be implemented consistently. Although often the team develops the plan based on information obtained through the functional behavioral assessment process, the plan must be communicated to all personnel and implemented by everyone who interacts with the student to provide this consistency. Figure 1 contains a

Defuse Minor Attention-Getting Behavior

- Attend to student(s) exhibiting expected behavior and ignore the student(s) displaying the problem behavior.
- Redirect the student privately to the task at hand ("Susie, it's math time. Let's go.") and point to seat.
- Present a choice between the expected behavior and a small negative consequence (e.g., loss of privilege). (Colvin, 1992; 1995; 1999; Colvin et al., 1997; Sprick, Garrison, & Howard, 1998).

Defuse Confrontation for a Rule Violation

- State the rule or expectation.
- Request explicitly that the student "take care of the problem."
- Present options (privately) for the student on how to take care of the problem.
- *Benefit:* Lessens the chance of confrontations. Options focus on how the student might decide to take care of the problem rather than whether student follows a specific direction (Colvin et al., 1997).

Reduce Confrontation in a Demand Situation

(Present the limits and choices without being confrontational.)

- Present expected behavior and negative consequence as a decision—it's the student's responsibility.
- Allow time for the student's decision.
- Withdraw from the student and pay attention to others.
- Follow through on the student's choice.

Disengage and Delay Responding for Serious Behavior

Break the cycle of interactions:

- Delay responding. Briefly look at the student, look at the floor, look detached, and pause.
- Make a disengaging response.
- Return to the student, redirect, and withdraw.
- Follow through.
- Debrief to help the student problem solve.

(Colvin et al., 1997; Walker et al., 1995)

Figure 2. Strategies for Defusing and Deescalating Behavior

sample precorrection plan adapted from Colvin and colleagues (1993).

Defusing and Deescalating Behavior. Often teachers and other school personnel are inadvertently trapped in an escalating interaction that proves to be extremely disruptive and can turn ugly. As I mentioned previously, staff members must recognize the potential for escalation and actively defuse a potentially volatile interaction early in the chain of events. Staff responses to confrontational or challenging behavior make a difference in whether it is defused or spirals out of control.

The following is an example of a confrontational student/adult exchange. First, the student engages in some defiant, challenging, or otherwise inappropriate behavior. The teacher reacts to the behavior by issuing a directive to the student that opposes the behavior. Then, the student issues a "so what" challenge. Frustrated, the teacher reacts to the student's increased verbal defiance and issues an "or else" or "bottom line" statement. Finally, the student becomes even more defiant and hostile or explosive (Colvin, 1999; Colvin et al., 1997; Walker et al., 1995).

The primary goal of defusing and deescalating a problem situation is to calm the student and assist him or her in reestablishing behavioral control and engaging in the prescribed activity. It is important to recognize that these strategies are supportive and need to be introduced before the behavior becomes too severe; otherwise, there is a risk of reinforcing the endless chain of serious behavior problems. In that the timing of intervention is critical, school personnel must become skilled at identifying student-specific early warning signs and aligning selected strategies with the needs of particular students.

Figure 2 outlines several strategies that may be helpful in defusing and deescalating student behaviors. The behaviors range from least intrusive to those that are more serious and confrontational. For example, minor attention-getting behavior, such as talking out in class or moving out of a seat, is less intrusive to the classroom climate than the behavior of a student who ver-

bally challenges the teacher, knowing that you will react by giving a direction that he or she can refuse.

It is important to note that if a student is already in an agitated state due to in-school or out-of-school triggers, even reasonable prompting to get to work or follow a directive can quickly spiral out of control to more serious behavior such as storming out of the room, crumpling paper, or throwing books. Although beyond the scope of our discussion, Colvin (1992; 1999) and others (Walker et al., 1995) have detailed a series of possible responses according to stages of aggression. Understanding the phenomenon of escalating patterns of behavior and having a repertoire of defusing strategies minimizes the likelihood that interactions between school personnel and students will escalate to more serious and out-of-control behavior.

Conclusion

Focusing on increasing the capacity of school personnel to deal more effectively with challenging behavior should be one of the top priorities in schools. For schools to succeed, administrators and faculty will need to remember the "3 A's" that will provide meaningful behavior supports to students with challenging behaviors and the school personnel who work with them: attitude, awareness, and action.

First, a change in attitude from a reactive to proactive perspective is vital. Behavior problems must be addressed the same as instructional problems. Second, school personnel must develop a heightened awareness and understanding that their responses to student behavior can make a significant difference. Administrators, faculty, and staff must commit themselves to preventing misbehavior from occurring and defusing and deescalating problem behaviors that do occur to prevent them from becoming more serious.

Finally, purposeful action strategies that teach school personnel how to (a) prevent or minimize misbehavior and provide student supports and (b) defuse potentially serious adult/student or student/student confrontations can open the doors to positive interactions and provide meaningful support for both students with challenging behaviors and the staff who work with them.

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Managing Kids: Direct Answers for Tricky Issues

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Traditionally, schools have responded to matters of student discipline by imposing various punitive sanctions. For most schools, this involves student suspensions for serious behavioral problems. The message conveyed to the student and the community is that the student is in need of punishment rather than in need of help. With media coverage of the spate of tragic episodes of school violence that have occurred across the United States, the "get-tough" response is met with a great deal of public approval. Witness, for example, the proliferation of so-called "zero-tolerance" policies that have been adopted by school boards across the country. Schools are encouraged by the public to tighten up their rules and regulations and increase the consequences for student misbehavior. There is a prevailing belief that we will better solve problems of student aggression and violence by making the consequences more punitive and oppressive.

Notwithstanding the popularity of get-tough policies, these responses contradict a basic purpose of education—namely, to provide knowledge and skills to resolve problems. Greater punishment as a single response to students, especially those who are eligible for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), is too simplistic to be of value to school administrators. The causes of violence and aggression are many and varied; so, too, must be the solutions to these problems. From this perspective, everyone holds a part of the solution. We are all stakeholders in the prevention of violence and in the maintenance of a psychologically and physically safe learning environment.

The challenge of managing the behavior of young people is increasingly difficult. We have witnessed a shift in many aspects of education that have exacerbated this challenge. Changes in our culture, the litigious nature of society, and the emphasis on student rights over responsibilities has made the job of school personnel a challenge of a proportion not previously seen in our schools.

Many would argue that the shift in the perception of the school from that of an academic institution to that of a social institution has left educators with the arduous task of trying to be all things to all people. In fact, we may be one of few professions who do not define ourselves by spelling out what we are not. As a result, we seem to have become the default institution to provide service for any condition that may impair, in any way, the ability of a child to receive a high-quality education. Consequently, we are beset with before-school, after-school, breakfast, and lunch programs as well as providing for medical, psychological, and social needs, along with a range of special education needs that might have a positive academic impact on the child. By contrast, other professions—notably the legal and medical professions—are quick to say what they do not do or what they do not have responsibility for.

In some instances, we have observed a shift from needs to wants to "gimme, gimme" in our attempts to define the needs of a child. Student individualized education program (IEP) and Section 504 conferences have sometimes deteriorated to a wish list for frustrated parents. Some school officials have expressed the feeling that the IEP coordinator has been cast in the role of an educational version of Santa Claus. Educators are reluctant to reject parent requests in the face of the threat of costly litigation and the further burden of paying litigants' legal costs. Paying for the services that result from an IEP conference can be more cost effective.

We have witnessed a growing number of lawyers trying to cash in on public money. As a result, the prospect of being sued for the most remote or obscure action looms large over the heads of most educators in the nation's education system. A number of schools have agreed to parent demands in the face of threatened lawsuits. This phenomenon will likely continue unless we devise new ways to balance rights and responsibilities.

Young people are too often parented in a context of situational ethics. Any inappropriate behavior can be persuasively rationalized by the right apologist who will

argue for the lack of individual culpability and personal responsibility for even the most heinous of crimes. Affixing blame is rampant in education. Given the right lawyer and the ability to pay for that representation, almost anyone can be excused for almost any behavior. As educators, we have seen that mentality creep into our profession far too pervasively. The legal profession has established a new specialty that was a rarity in the past decade—school law. Some attorneys, with little or no school-related experience, are wading into complex educational issues.

In addition, educators are finding it increasingly difficult to fulfill their role as societal change agents. Education is the key to a better future, and any social change rests on the pivotal prerequisite of education. However, we frequently justify our actions in relation to discipline and management of students on the premise that we are simply reflecting the prevailing mores of the community we serve. At the same time, we bemoan the social, cultural, and structural failures of our communities. As a result, we argue in defense of discipline policies and procedures to reflect the deteriorating culture we have such concerns about. Our original mission has been derailed by the failure to stand in opposition to the changes in the culture that foretell the demise of our role in society.

We have also seen a growing curricular emphasis on self-esteem, which conveys to young people the message that feeling good makes you perform better, whereas in the real world performing better makes you feel good. This reversal of priority has led to confusion over what constitutes good emotional health. Some authorities have asserted that this confusion contributes to the problem of learned helplessness, drug dependence, and other issues so devastating to the current generation of young people.

So what do we do: cling to the status quo or change the fact that our profession is so resistant to change? I strongly support the latter option. We can become more relevant in providing for the needs of young people. We can adapt quickly and effectively to the students who enter our doors each year, eliminating the growing chasm between what we know and what we do. We can assume a leadership role in providing for the needs of today's students. We can resurrect the role of education as the change agent in society and maintain that position in the face of so many social forces that wish to keep us in a reflective mode. We can define ourselves professionally as educators and articulate what we do in concert with what we do *not* do. In so doing, we will shift the role of many social services to the rightful providers in our society. We will focus on teaching and learning. Everything we do must be in accordance with the primary tasks of teaching and learning.

Given this position, how do we deal with youngsters who are defiant, adversarial, and simply unwilling to comply with our expectations? We must create a system that manages people fairly and meets the emotional, academic, and social needs of the individual. But here we face another challenge: How do we do all this with little or no money?

We do not need new knowledge, nor do we need expensive packaged innovations that represent the current fad of the day. We need to reevaluate what we already know in our profession and make better application of this existing knowledge. We need to balance punishment with therapeutic intervention. We need to balance rights with responsibilities. We need to assume leadership in educational reform and better assert what we know and what we can do.

The solution is two-dimensional. First, the entire school system needs an inclusive yet simple plan that represents our current state of knowledge. It must enjoin all stakeholders in finding interventions that protect kids, ensure an effective academic and nonacademic learning environment, and provide appropriate consequences for student behavior. Second, there needs to be an intervention system tailored to the needs of the individual student. While fairness for all and consistency of response is sacred, different kids succeed or fail for different reasons. The challenge is to address students' diverse needs within the context of the existing financial resources, faculty and staff, and problems of an individual school.

We believe the CHAMPS plan and its complement, the confluence model, represent a practical and workable solution to the dilemma of dealing with today's young people even in the context of rules and regulations applicable to the young person from a previous generation.

This approach has two dimensions. First, there is a system-wide program that enlists the aid of everyone in the school system. Every stakeholder has an area of responsibility in the development of the CHAMPS plan, which comprises a Crisis plan, a Hall supervision plan, an Alternative-to-suspension program, Mediation, a Police liaison, and a Safety plan. School safety and the effective management of young people cannot be left to any one group in the school. Thus, another issue remains: Can special education continue to be the default decision for serving students who do not properly fit the mold of traditional education? We believe the proliferation of educational diagnoses is disproportionate to the number of young people who legitimately need these services. As a result, we think there is a flood of students into special education who can be served adequately within the confines of regular education if we can be more creative and smarter in how we approach the problems of today's young people.

Second, our response to learning or behavior needs must be tailored individually to the behavior of the student. These needs are not, in many cases, related to a

need for special education services. Too often, schools with no other options for effective programming turn to special education without examining the long-range implications of doing so. A student's inability to benefit from the traditional classroom might be a function of the need for that learning environment to change more than it is an indication of the need for special education services. The confluence model, we believe, adequately addresses this concern.

CHAMPS: The System Dimension

CHAMPS is an acronym that represents the six dimensions of a system that is committed to a safe and productive educational environment. As previously noted, these are crisis planning, hall supervision, an alternative to suspension, mediation that is peer based, police liaison, and a safety plan for the movement of people in and around the school. Its essential prerequisite is the simultaneity of responsibility. The CHAMPS plan is predicated on the assumption that every stakeholder in the system is equally responsible for establishing and maintaining a productive educational environment. No one associated with the school can shed the responsibility for order and safety.

A crisis plan must be developed that is comprehensive enough to address a variety of potentially catastrophic events, yet simple enough to be enacted on a moment's notice. We have developed a four-dimensional system: Lockdown, Levels, Links, and Lists. While there are many details embedded in the plan, it can be executed with great speed if it is needed (see Moriarty, Maeyama, & Fitzgerald, 1993).

Most problems in school occur in the halls, during the time between classes and before and after school. The involvement of every adult in the school building is essential to the success of any attempt to provide effective supervision. Our solution has been to ask all staff members to be in the hall during any two passing periods of their choosing. These agreements are tallied and returned to all teachers, who are then aware of who is in the hall with them. Without negotiations or the involvement of union representatives we were able to get every teacher to agree to volunteer for this program. An honest and accurate explanation of the importance of teacher involvement was essential and sufficient to make this program operate. In addition, we conducted staff training on confrontation management and effective interventions, both of which were well received. The responsibility for this training was given to the police liaison officers.

An alternative to suspension is the major component of the CHAMPS plan. Essentially, students who act out inappropriately, especially when aggression or violence is involved, must learn ways to respond that will improve their chances of handling their conflicts appropriately in the future. This will be discussed in further detail as it applies to the confluence model.

With the CHAMPS plan, students play a key role in the solution of school-based problems. Peer mediation is necessary not only for what it does for the disputants in conflict situations, but also for the emotional well-being of the mediators. Our experience in developing mediation programs for the past 13 years has resulted in some excellent results that have enhanced the culture of the school and reduced the number of student problems (McDonald & Moriarty, 1999; Moriarty & McDonald, 1999; Tolson, McDonald, & Moriarty, 1992).

A police involvement in schools may seem, at first glance, an overreaction in a school that has not had acts of major violence. However, given the evolution of the profession of law enforcement and the skills police officers have developed, we view their help as a necessity, not a luxury. The police liaison officers assigned to our school assume a variety of roles, from protector to consultant to community liaison. In addition, the combined expertise of school personnel and law enforcement personnel has led to a significant training component for the staff and the community. Presentations on topics such as predicting violence, school safety, and crisis management have been offered to many groups in and around the community. More details can be found in Moriarty and Fitzgerald (1992a, 1992b).

Finally, the management of the flow of traffic in a large high school is a challenge that must be addressed. The safety plan developed in consultation with the police liaison officers has enhanced this process greatly.

No one of these programs is more or less important than any other. If one part breaks down, the entire system will suffer. However, when everyone assumes his or her responsibility, the environment for effective teaching and learning is optimized.

The Individual Dimension: The Confluence Model

A confluence model adds a number of elements to the practice of school-wide management. For example, an interdisciplinary approach to management leads to more effective solutions. The confluence of all stakeholders in the resolution of a student's challenges represents a response of multiple solutions proportionate to the multiple causes of the student's behavior problems. Several dimensions of this concept may differ from the traditional approach to management, the most important of which I discuss in the next several sections.

Positive Nonpunitive Interventions

The CHAMPS plan involves the use of a positive intervention, one that is educationally sound and behaviorally structured. It includes the development of curriculum designed to teach students the skills they lack as evidenced by the nature of the discipline problem. In addition, the "what" of a discipline problem is brought into balance with an equal concern for the "why" of the behavior. This concern for why the behavior has occurred over what the behavior consists of is both collaborative and interdisciplinary. At one school we accomplished this by referring the student to the counselor for a consultation and parent conference before deciding on any disciplinary action. We do not eliminate the use of negative consequences, but we strive to balance it with positive and therapeutic strategies.

Professional Collaboration

The crux of the confluence model is the collaborative efforts of counseling personnel, the dean of students, law enforcement personnel, and whatever community agencies are available. Together, they plan a program of positive intervention tailored to the unique needs of the student. The counselor intervention involves an in-depth interview designed to ascertain preexisting emotional and cognitive areas of difficulty that influenced the problem. This interview follows the student's completion of a Rational Situation Analysis (RSA) form designed to identify antecedent emotional and cognitive conditions. This questionnaire requires the student to analyze his or her behavior from a therapeutic perspective by looking into what that student "brought" to the school on the day a problem arose. (A copy of this questionnaire is available from the author.)

Parent Input Before Disposition

In a traditional system, the disposition of a discipline problem occurs before parent input is solicited. In the confluence model, parent involvement is initiated by the counselor before any disposition of the problem situation. A specific format for this dialog has been developed for this program. Upon reviewing the results of the RSA form with the student, the counselor calls the parent to review any pertinent information about the causes of the student's problem. This approach prevents the commonly adversarial response of parents who are most concerned with the disposition of the problem at the expense of discussing the problem and discovering its causes through a dialog with the counselor. Through this proactive response to parent resistance, an alliance develops between the parent and the school, better enabling them to focus on the common interests of the student.

Recently, we added some interesting and revealing elements of parent involvement. First, the PASS (Parents Accompanying Suspended Students) program is available to any parent who may think an out-of-school suspension is inappropriate. With PASS, we reduce any student's suspension by 50% if the parent agrees to accompany the student to school and stay with him or her for the day. The success of this venture led to the PATS program (Parents Accompanying Tardy Students). In this case, the parent of any student who begins to accumulate too many incidences of being late to class is invited to accompany the student from one room to another to actually see how the time is spent during the passing period. As might be expected, all of our parents who took advantage of this option found that the student did not spend time wisely in the hall between classes.

Variable Suspension Time

In the past, student suspension equated with student exclusion from school for a fixed period of time during which nothing is expected from the student. That strategy can accelerate the rate of school avoidance and acting-out problems. The confluence model requires the student to show mastery of new coping skills before being allowed to return to class. Consequently, the length of the intervention varies according to the time it takes to teach the content of the curriculum. The duration of an intervention becomes a function of the amount of information learned rather than a fixed amount of time. We believe this represents an accurate application of the best principles of mastery learning to the disposition of student problems. Initially, we adapted a number of prepared intervention curricula developed by Advantage Press (http://www.advantagepress.com). These curricula have been adapted and others developed as a by-product of the implementation of this program.

Positive Collaboration with Law Enforcement Personnel

Since some school problems are inherently conflictual, they have the potential to become a concern of the law enforcement community. Using police officers in a number of broadly defined nonpolice roles assists in the development of a proactive relationship with students. This approach holds promise for conflict prevention, since police officers are able to help students regularly and establish positive relationships that will be helpful in times of crisis. It is this critical time of need that is often the most opportune time for impacting the behavior and emotional development of the student.

Curriculum Areas

To address school problems in a more effective and educationally sound manner, the issue of effective curriculum development must be addressed. To this end, we have developed curriculum materials to address specific areas that commonly lead to school suspension, including the following:

1. Fighting Management: a curriculum addressing alternatives to violence.
2. Anger Management: curriculum materials to teach students alternative means to express anger.
3. Time Management: a program to teach students values and methods of being on time.
4. Confrontation Management: curriculum materials to teach students methods of assertiveness that do not escalate emotional tension or levels of preexisting aggression.
5. Gang Activity Management: a curriculum that highlights the negative elements of gang involvement and develops strategies for students to cope with gang involvement.
6. Drug and Alcohol Management: curriculum materials to promote student acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitudes essential to avoiding the use of drugs and alcohol.
7. Multicultural Awareness Management: curriculum materials to promote understanding between culturally and linguistically diverse groups.
8. Management of Life Decisions.
9. Civility.
10. Others determined to be locally relevant.

We encourage schools to develop curriculum units that relate most directly to their unique needs and to develop assessment materials directly related to these materials. For example, we recently developed a unit on civility in response to a growing faculty concern that student behavior generally is lacking in this quality.

Conclusion

The CHAMPS plan is a strategy for promoting shared responsibility for establishing and maintaining a positive school environment. Its elegance is found in its simplicity. Nothing new or revolutionary is included; rather, it brings together all stakeholders and emphasizes shared responsibility. No one is more important than any other person in the broad scheme of effective student management.

The confluence model uses the best elements of school discipline, curriculum development, and school guidance practice. While it is nonpunitive, it still conveys a powerful message to the student. Time is no longer fixed for suspensions; it becomes secondary, thereby enabling students to learn new behavior. Antecedent conditions—emotional and cognitive—are formally evaluated before the disposition of any disciplinary problem. Finally, we feel strongly that parent involvement is meaningful and should be obtained in a proactive manner, thereby reducing the possibility of adversarial encounters that too often typify the relationship between the school and parents of troubled students.

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Developing Effective Behavioral Intervention Plans and Positive Behavioral Supports

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While addressing challenging student behavior consumes considerable time in the school and classroom, most school personnel feel inadequately prepared to deal with issues of student discipline (Romi & Freund, 1999). Teacher preparation programs often devote little time to problem behavior and classroom management (Reschke & Hegland, 1999). There often exists a naïve belief that a solid curriculum will eliminate the need for behavior management strategies because the students will be too interested in the lesson to misbehave. While a meaningful and effective curriculum is necessary, it is hardly sufficient to prevent all behavior problems in a classroom. Dramatic changes in family structure, demographic shifts in the school-aged population, and increased poverty have resulted in a larger proportion of children who enter school with increased risk for emotional and educational problems (Griffith, 1999; Snyder, 1993). It follows that school personnel must be better prepared to address these needs if they are to prevent the development of serious behavioral problems.

School personnel have long relied on punitive consequences to deal with undesired student behavior in the hope that punishment will discourage the future occurrence of the target behavior(s). In fact, punishment was the sole consequence for over 90% of the infractions observed in one study of school disciplinary practices (Colvin, Sugai, & Kame'enui, 1992). While the application of a mild aversive response may curb the undesired behavior of many students, it has been shown to be ineffective as a means of improving the behavior of the small minority of students who display the majority of challenging behaviors. The use of punishment has often been shown to further alienate these students and to exacerbate their disruptive behavior (Gable, Quinn, Rutherford, Howell, & Hoffman, 1998).

The current "get tough" and "zero tolerance" policies adopted by many school boards and school faculties have resulted in an inclination to address student disruption through exclusion from the classroom and the school (e.g., referral to the dean or principal's office, suspension, expulsion). Although there is little evidence to support the fact that suspension and expulsion are effective in changing student behavior, their use has increased in schools across the nation (Skiba & Peterson, 1999; Skiba, Peterson, & Williams, 1997). Students at the greatest risk for academic and social failure are frequently "pushed away" from the educational settings that are perhaps best equipped to meet their needs. Once alienated (or removed) from the school setting, where will these students turn to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to function as productive citizens within our communities?

Fortunately, there is a growing realization that school personnel must begin to find ways to address the behavior of challenging students through the use of proactive, preventative, and positive behavior supports rather than punishment. The 1997 Amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), for example, require the use of positive behavioral supports when addressing the behaviors of students with educational disabilities that interfere with their learning or that of their peers (Conroy, Clark, Gable, & Fox, 1999). The challenge is to identify effective strategies for developing these more positive and proactive approaches. In what follows, we will explore some of the empirically validated procedures educators can use to develop effective behavioral intervention plans and the positive behavioral supports needed for student success. We will examine the need to explore a school's existing data related to behavioral offenses. With knowledge of what behaviors constitute significant concerns, educators can begin to develop and implement systemic programs to address these target behaviors on a variety of levels.

Exploring the Existing Data

An important first step in developing a school-wide or classroom discipline program involves the systematic examination of existing behavior problems as well as the current practices to address these problems within the school or classroom. This is facilitated by the fact that federal law requires school administrators to keep referral information for students whose behavior results in suspension or expulsion (U.S. Department of Education, 1980). Additional data that identify a more complete record of discipline problems can help educators pinpoint behavior problems that, while not resulting in suspension or expulsion, monopolize a considerable amount of time and energy on the part of school personnel. Figure 1 shows a sample disciplinary referral form that has proven helpful in many schools. Information from a form such as this can be entered into a typical computer spreadsheet for ease in record maintenance and data manipulation.

Together, administrators and faculty can review student discipline records to identify the following:

- *The nature of common offenses.* What are the most common offenses that result in students being referred for disciplinary action? High numbers of referrals for specific problem behaviors will help to identify areas in which students require additional skill instruction. Programs of skill instruction and student behavior monitoring can be implemented to teach and reinforce desired alternative behaviors.
- *The time and location of high-rate or serious behavior problems.* The time and location of problem behaviors can be used to assist school personnel in the identification of needed behavioral supports and services (e.g., additional staff supervision in the hallways during transition times). Increased skill instruction, supervision, or support can be provided at those times and in those locations that appear to occasion problem behaviors.
- *Students with a record of repetitive offenses.* Students with a high number of referrals for repeated offenses often require a level of support and service beyond that provided to the typical student. Repeated offenses suggest that current disciplinary efforts may be ineffective.
- *Common consequences delivered for various offenses.* Exploration of the consequences imposed on students would allow faculty to determine whether the consequences are reasonable and instructional. Do these consequences hold the promise of promoting student success (e.g., an instructional consequence), or do they simply suppress the display of undesired behavior through the delivery of an aversive?
- *Gender, ethnic, and cultural demographics of students referred for disciplinary action.* A careful examination of disciplinary referrals and consequences can allow school personnel to identify any patterns of differential treatment of students or student groups that might indicate cultural misunderstanding, misinterpretation of student behavior, or cultural bias.
- *Teachers and staff members who refer students for disciplinary action.* This information may help identify teachers or other staff members who might benefit from additional skill development or support. For example, teachers who refer high numbers of students may lack the skills necessary to avoid power struggles with students or might employ ineffective practices to prevent problem behavior. On the other hand, these teachers may have an unusually challenging group of students who require additional teacher support. However, teachers who display low referral rates may also need additional training and support, since a low level of referral does not necessarily signal effective behavior management. In some cases, these teachers may exhibit an unwillingness or inability to enforce behavioral expectations.

Drawing on this information, school personnel can identify areas in which current practices appear to be effective as well as those in which they appear to be inadequate. Together, the staff can develop an action plan to address problem areas in a way that encourages student success and the development of appropriate alternatives to problem behavior.

Developing a Unified Code of Discipline

Virtually every school has a student or parent handbook that, among other things, identifies critical school rules and general behavioral expectations for all students (e.g., students are expected to solve social conflict peacefully; aggression will not be tolerated). As schools attempt to develop clear expectations for student behavior, these rules may need to be carefully reviewed. Both students and adults must have a clear understanding of the rules if the school is to develop a positive school climate aimed at the promotion of socially competent behavior (White, Algozzine, Audette, Marr, & Ellis, 2001).

While it is reasonable and desirable for schools to have a unified set of rules and expectations, a rigid, standardized set of consequences for each student infraction (e.g., physical aggression will result in a minimum of a 3-day suspension) is problematic and gener-

For Office Use: Recorded ___/___/___
Age: _____ Grade _____
Gender (circle): Male Female
Ethnicity _____

_____ **School Disciplinary Referral**

Date: ___/___/_____

Name of Student: _____ **Student ID#** _____

Name of Person Making the Referral: _____

Time the Offense Took Place: ___:___ a.m. p.m. **Others Involved:** _____

_____

Location of Offense: _____ _____

Nature of the Offense:

- ☐ Tardy
- ☐ Truancy
- ☐ Leaving the Instructional Area
- ☐ Failure to Accept Responsibility for Behavior
- ☐ Failure to Complete Work
- ☐ Failure to Follow Directions
- ☐ Swearing
- ☐ Excessive Out of Seat
- ☐ Other (Please specify)
  _____
  _____
- ☐ Rude or Disrespectful Behavior
- ☐ Teasing/Taunting
- ☐ Swearing
- ☐ Verbal Aggression/ Threats
- ☐ Excessive Talk-Outs/ Making Noises
- ☐ Lying/Cheating/ Dishonesty
- ☐ Vandalizing or Trespassing
- ☐ Burglary, Robbery, or Theft
- ☐ Temper Tantrum/ Uncontrolled Anger
- ☐ Physical Aggression/ Fighting
- ☐ Gang Activity
- ☐ Arson or Fire Alarm Violation
- ☐ Possession of Controlled Substance
  Identify:
  _____
- ☐ Weapons Offense
  Identify:
  _____

Consequence Provided:

- ☐ Discussion and Verbal Warning
- ☐ Time-Out from Reinforcement
- ☐ Sent to Office/ Principal Referral
- ☐ Loss of Privilege (specify)
  _____
- ☐ Detention
- ☐ Saturday School
- ☐ Parent Notification
- ☐ Restitution
- ☐ Suspension (specify length: _____ days)
- ☐ Expulsion
- ☐ Police Notification/Arrest Agency
- ☐ Other (specify)
  _____
  _____

Alternative Behavior: Specify the desired alternative behavior to be taught and reinforced.

_____

_____

Figure 1. Sample Disciplinary Referral Record

ally ineffective. The etiology of student behavior problems may vary considerably even for the same surface behavior (e.g., aggression). Determining an appropriate consequence on the basis of the surface behavior alone fails to take into account these differing etiologies. For example, a student with a severe communication disorder may employ aggression as a means to communicate her needs (e.g., discomfort, a need to escape a task). Another student may engage in aggression as a means to gain popularity with his peer group. A third student who has been teased, taunted, and subjected to racial and ethnic slurs from a specific group of peers may finally strike back aggressively at one of his tormenters. The etiology and the function served by aggression for each student may be quite different.

The disability of the first student impacts her behavior and contributes significantly to her display of aggression. She needs an intervention that will provide an alternative approach for signalling her need(s). The second student appears to desire peer affiliation and popularity and has selected aggression as his means to gain this desired attention. For many students, acts of aggression have proven to be an effective means to gain attention and popularity (Rodkin, Farmer, Pearl, & Van Acker, 2000). Effective interventions for these students require efforts to strengthen their bonding with school personnel *and* the provision of alternative means to gain peer acceptance and popularity. The events surrounding the third student's aggression suggest the interplay of cultural issues (both the cultural attitudes and beliefs of the students and the school culture). In this instance, the question arises: Does the school culture encourage and support racial and ethnic intolerance?

School personnel often defend efforts to deliver uniform consequences for similar infractions as an attempt to maintain fairness for all students. However, if a school administrator were to deliver a standardized consequence (e.g., a 3-day suspension) to each of the three students we just discussed, there is little reason to believe that the consequence would have the desired effect for each child. The first student might fail to connect the consequence to the offense and, without a more appropriate means to signal her needs, be left with increased frustration. The second student might actually be held in higher esteem by his target peer group for having been suspended. The third student might feel even greater alienation from the school and faculty, increasing his desire for justice and revenge. Is there anything fair in this type of discipline? The concept that *fair* means *equal* is a kind of moral reasoning that typically is found in children 10 years of age or younger (Kohlberg, 1984). For adults, the concept of fairness within the school should equate to giving each student what he or she needs to succeed.

There is little question that when rule infractions occur there should be some kind of consequences. School personnel should give serious thought to the nature of common infractions and discuss reasonable consequences for such infractions. A common sense of what constitutes an infraction and a predictable consequence for such infractions will help to establish a safe and sensible school environment. However, the selection of consequences for given infractions cannot be inflexible. Consequences may need to be more prescriptive for some students (e.g., those with disabilities that impact behavior, those for whom common disciplinary practices have proven ineffective). Moreover, these consequences should serve to directly teach and support desired behavior—not simply punish undesired behavior.

Employing the Three-Tier Model of Prevention and Intervention

For years, epidemiologists in the fields of psychiatry and mental health have supported the three-tier model of prevention and intervention suggested by Caplan (1964). In this model, efforts to address the disease or disorder are delivered at three distinct levels: primary, secondary, and tertiary.

- *Primary or universal interventions* are delivered to large groups of individuals who may not yet show any signs or symptoms of the problem being addressed. These primary intervention programs are aimed at the prevention of the problem before it arises. Primary prevention programs may be proactive or reactive (Catalano & Dooley, 1980). A proactive primary program is designed to eliminate causal or risk factors related to the development of the problem. Programs aimed at promoting a caring school climate, making adjustments to the school setting or routines (e.g., lunch procedures), and teaching rules and expected behavior are examples of proactive primary prevention efforts. Reactive primary prevention programs seek to improve coping responses and to augment the individual's resistance to potentially harmful stressors. Within the school, universal social skills instruction programs and social problem-solving skill programs might be delivered as primary reactive programs. Effective primary prevention programs are estimated to be effective at addressing the behavioral needs of up to 75% of a typical school's student population (Sugai et al., 2000).
- *Secondary or targeted interventions* are designed to meet the needs of individuals who have been exposed to causal agents or who live in conditions that place

them at significant risk for the development of the targeted problem. Secondary programs also are provided to individuals who are showing the first symptoms of the problem but may not have the full-blown disease or disorder. Secondary interventions provide services to increase resistance to the problem and to prevent the exacerbation of symptoms. Examples of secondary programs for behavior problems might include supportive programs to help at-risk students achieve academically (e.g., peer tutoring, homework clubs, intensive instruction, curricular accommodations and modifications) and/or socially (e.g., adult mentoring programs, intensive anger-management programs). For many students with disabilities, their individualized education program (IEP) may identify supports (e.g., providing written directions) and accommodations (e.g., providing material on audiotape for reading disorders) that help prevent the display of challenging behavior and, when implemented correctly, eliminate the need for more intensive intervention strategies (i.e., formal behavioral intervention plans). Approximately 20% to 25% of students require the additional support provided by secondary prevention/intervention programs.

- *Tertiary or specified programs* are intensive interventions provided to individuals who display the disease or disorder. These interventions attempt to improve the course of the disease or to minimize the harmful sequelae once illness has been diagnosed. Tertiary programs are typically specific to the individual and generally target both the individual and the social contexts in which he or she interacts. Tertiary programs developed to address challenging behavior(s) often involve a functional assessment of the challenging behavior(s) and the development of individualized behavioral intervention plans. Behavioral intervention plans should identify strengths and resources within the student, the team, and the resources and services that will be needed to promote desired alternative behavior and help eliminate undesired behavior. Strategies to address the needs of students with serious behavior problems may require so-called wrap-around services that provide intervention and support within multiple social contexts (e.g., the school, the home, the community). Between 5% and 7% of the students in a typical school may require intervention at a tertiary level (Sugai et al., 2000).

Most Behavior Is Purposeful

The fact that a particular behavior displayed by a student is a problem may often be obvious; the reason(s) why the student engages in the behavior may be more difficult to discern. Like the rest of us, children and youths have needs and desires. To get these needs and desires met, they behave. Much of what we call *misbehavior* is for the child a simple act of attempting to get a need or desire met. A number of common functions for behavior have been postulated (Neel & Cessna, 1993). These include:

- Attention.
- Escape or avoidance.
- Power, control, or competence.
- Peer affiliation.
- Self-gratification or self-expression.
- Justice or revenge.

For example, a student might display noncompliant or even disruptive and insubordinate behavior when asked by a teacher to participate in a given academic task. In many classrooms, the teacher response would involve a verbal interaction with the student that might escalate to the point of telling the student to leave the classroom. In essence the student is allowed to escape the undesired activity. While the teacher intends for the removal from the classroom to serve as an effective deterrent to the display of future classroom outbursts, this response is likely to reinforce the behavior and, in turn, increase the likelihood that it will occur in the future. In contrast, an effective intervention would require the teacher to identify why the student wishes to escape (e.g., Can the student do the work as expected? Does the nature of the task trigger emotional stress?) If the student lacks the skill to complete the work, the teacher must increase the student's skill level or make curricular accommodations so that the work fits the student's ability level. If the student can do the work but chooses not to do it, the issue is one of confidence and/or motivation.

One of the most important philosophical shifts that educators must make to move away from a punitive approach to discipline toward one that is more proactive and positive is the understanding that most behavior serves a function for the student. Moreover, in most cases, the function served is a legitimate need or desire. The problem arises from the specific behavior(s) the student employs to meet these needs. However, it is unreasonable and sometimes unethical to expect that a student will surrender an effective, albeit problematic, means for meeting a legitimate need unless we provide another reasonable and equally effective means to meet the same need (i.e., replacement behavior). The task confronting school personnel is not how to stop the undesired behavior, but rather how to promote a socially acceptable means for students to meet their needs successfully.

Functional Assessment of Behavior

As they attempt to find ways to address undesired behavior, many school personnel routinely question the effectiveness of daily classroom practices and gather information that will help them to understand the function a particular behavior serves for the student. When a student displays serious or chronic problem behavior, best practice calls for educators to engage in a functional assessment of that student's behavior (Gable et al., 1998). This process allows school personnel to explore student behavior in light of the context in which it occurs to help identify the function of the behavior and to elucidate the variables in the environment that serve to occasion and maintain the behavior. This formal procedure is typically reserved for those problem behaviors that appear resistant to primary and even secondary interventions applied as part of the school-wide discipline program. As mentioned earlier, the 1997 IDEA Amendments mandate the use of functional assessments and the development of behavioral intervention plans for any students with disabilities whose behavior impacts their learning or that of their peers.

The functional assessment of behavior involves any number of possible procedures, depending on the circumstances surrounding the behavior. Regardless of the procedures used, the process generally involves the following steps:

- *Identifying the specific behavior or behaviors of interest.* Before accurate information can be gathered related to a student's behavior, a clear definition of the target behavior must be developed. The behavior must be described in observable and measurable terms to allow everyone involved to direct attention to the same behavior and to report on its occurrence in a similar manner.
- *Forming an informed hypothesis as to the function the behavior serves.* Initially, the individual or individuals conducting the functional assessment will work with the student and those adults who play a significant role in the student's life to generate preliminary hypotheses related to the function(s) the behavior(s) may serve for the student. These constitute the best guess of those familiar with the student.
- *Collecting and analyzing data to either support the hypothesized function or identify an alternative function.* Data collection might involve a review of student records; interviews with parents, teachers, other significant adults, and/or the student; completion of specific rating scales or checklists; and/or the direct observation of the student within the context. The selection of the data-collection procedures to be used depends on a number of factors, including the nature of the behavior (e.g., high-frequency vs. low-frequency), the setting in which the behavior most likely occurs (e.g., public setting vs. private setting), and the student's current placement (e.g., a student may be referred to an alternative setting for safety reasons and will not be able to be directly observed in the setting where the target behavior took place). A minimum of three independent sources of data are typically required to support a given hypothesized function (i.e., triangulation of the data) prior to the development of the behavioral intervention plan.
- *Testing the hypothesis.* When possible, the hypothesis should be tested to provide further confirmation regarding the function(s) of the behavior. For example, the hypothesized function for a student's behavior (e.g., refusal to complete assigned work) may be avoidance (e.g., the student does not want to risk looking incompetent). The teacher might provide the student with an opportunity to serve as a peer tutor for work within the student's current mastery level. If the student complies with this type of task (e.g., one in which he or she can clearly demonstrate competence), we may more readily accept the hypothesis that noncompliance for more difficult tasks serves the function of escape or avoidance. The manipulation of the hypothesized variable in an effort to test the impact on the target behavior has been termed the *functional analysis of behavior*.
- *Developing the behavioral intervention plan.* Once the function of the behavior has been identified, a plan can be developed to alter the student's behavior. As mentioned previously, this plan will typically involve two separate but related procedures.
  - An acceptable alternative behavior must be identified that the student can use to meet the function currently being met by engaging in the undesired target behavior. If no such behavior currently exists in the student's repertoire, a new behavior must be taught. This alternative behavior will need to be encouraged (i.e., occasioned) and systematically reinforced. We should also ensure that the alternative behavior is culturally relevant for the student and that the amount of effort expended to engage in the response is similar to that of the target behavior.
  - At the same time, the teacher must implement a plan designed to curtail the effectiveness of the undesired target behavior in meeting the identified function. This will generally require the application of some specified consequence each time the behavior is observed. The exact nature of

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the consequence, however, will depend upon the function served by the behavior.

- *Monitoring the integrity of the implementation of the behavioral intervention plan and the evaluation of effectiveness.* Once developed, the behavioral intervention plan will need to be implemented consistently in the manner prescribed in the plan. Far too often, school personnel expend considerable energy to conduct a functional assessment of behavior and develop a behavioral intervention plan only to implement that plan haphazardly. The implementation should be systematically monitored and data should be collected to ensure that the desired changes in behavior are taking place.

Changing Student Behavior Typically Requires Changing Teacher Behavior

The success of any discipline program will ultimately rest upon the willingness and ability of the school staff to implement the procedures outlined in the plan. A lack of necessary skills, misunderstood expectations, or a basic unwillingness of teachers or others to implement the program faithfully can threaten a school's best efforts to implement an effective discipline program. Likewise, staff behavior that belittles, embarrasses, or demeans students will undermine school-wide efforts to support student success.

As with the identification of expected student behaviors, administrators and school staff will need to identify the behaviors that will be expected of the adults in the school setting (e.g., treat students with respect at all times). Data derived from the school discipline referrals, student progress and achievement records, and both formal and informal observation of the student-teacher interaction can be used to identify the expected behaviors. The school faculty should actively participate in an honest examination of the role of adult behavior in the school. For example, many faculty identify student disrespect as a critical concern in the school. Most teachers suggest that appropriate behaviors should be taught at home. It is true that some students have not learned to respect adults in their homes, and they are not going to learn to do so outside educational settings—from television, for example. In fact, the school may be the only setting for these students to learn this important skill. Consider your school and the students who are most likely to display disrespectful behavior. Do the adults in your school consistently address these students in a respectful manner? Hopefully, you can answer in the affirmative. However, some school personnel would have to acknowledge that while most students are dealt with respectfully, some of the students who are most at risk experience a very different situation.

Behavior change is a complex and often difficult task. This is as true for teachers as it is for students. The need to monitor teacher behavior and provide clear, honest, and frequent feedback is critical. Teachers cannot observe themselves as they teach. They depend on others to provide the feedback they need to enhance their instruction. Unfortunately, far too little administrator time is devoted to the task of monitoring and supervising instruction. Administrators spend much of their time addressing minor disciplinary incidents instead of providing teachers with feedback related to their interactions with the students.

When monitoring teacher behavior, it is essential that administrators collect data that allow teachers to see the relationship between their behavior and that of their students. Effective data collection allows administrators (or others) to share with teachers as they attempt to interpret the implications of the data. The presentation of intelligible data can often go a long way toward presenting the facts; freeing the administrator to support teachers and staff in the process of needed change. A number of effective strategies for gathering data on teacher and student interaction are available to teachers and school administrators (e.g., Sugai et al., 2000; Van Acker, 2002)

Change does not happen simply because school personnel have identified the need for change to occur. Typically, they will have to develop plans and actively support change. Both teachers and students may need accommodations and systematic monitoring to provide feedback related to behavioral change. Teachers, for example, may engage in a particular behavior that, while effective for most students, interferes with the learning of some specific students. The goal of monitoring is not to identify poor teachers or generally ineffective teaching, but to provide teachers with information and feedback related to their teaching. The purpose of providing feedback is to assist the teacher in the identification of more effective teaching strategies for all students. This type of monitoring is needed by excellent teachers as well as less effective teachers and by experienced teachers as well as those who are new to the profession.

Conclusion

The task of developing effective school-wide and classroom-based discipline programs, behavioral intervention plans, and a system of positive behavioral supports for challenging students requires a significant commitment of time and energy. As detailed in the preceding

discussion, those involved in the process must engage in a number of activities.

- An assessment of school discipline records and the examination of the school social context to identify where current strengths and problems exist.
- Identification of intervention targets and goals for the school-wide and classroom discipline programs. This will include the identification and effective communication of expected behavior for both students and school personnel.
- Implementation of a continuum of positive behavioral supports that meet the needs of students whose behaviors cross a continuum of seriousness and severity.
- Development of key support programs for students (e.g., peer mediation programs, homework clubs, structured activities during key unstructured times) and teachers (e.g., peer mentoring, effective teacher assistance teams).
- Active monitoring (systematic observation) of teacher and student interaction.

Effective school-wide discipline involves far more than the identification of agreed-upon consequences for specified rule infractions. Any school discipline program that does not concentrate first and foremost on the prevention of behavior problems is seriously flawed. There is far more empirically supported research identifying effective prevention practices than there is related to the effective intervention and remediation of established problem behavior.

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Proactive Approaches to Working with Challenging Behaviors: Voices from the Field

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The issue of school discipline is one of the greatest concerns facing teachers, administrators, and families. Mirroring society at large, responses to misbehavior in school tend to be reactive and punitive, and they are rarely individualized. However, there is little empirical evidence to support these responses—particularly when dealing with students whose behavior problems are longstanding (Gottfredson, 1997). The accumulated evidence suggests that the adoption of district-wide zero-tolerance policies that result in suspensions and expulsions from school, in particular, do not improve student behavior or make a positive contribution to school safety (Skiba, 2002). For these reasons, there is growing consensus that proactive discipline and individualized approaches are more effective with this population (Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders, 2002; Gottfredson, 1997; Skiba, 2002).

In response to the challenge of responding proactively to students with behavior problems, the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders (CCBD) sponsored a working forum on the topic in February of 2002 in Tampa, Florida. Through keynote presentations and facilitated discussion groups, the forum addressed a number of broad themes, including behavioral issues in the schools, using school personnel to make accommodations and modifications, and creating high-quality behavioral intervention plans to promote school success. What follows are the most significant aspects of discussions among teachers, behavior consultants, mental health providers, administrators, family members, and higher education faculty involved in teacher preparation who met throughout the 2-day forum.

Behavioral Issues in the Schools

We began our discussions with unanimous agreement that using positive, proactive academic and behavioral approaches was the preferred method for working with students with behavior problems. However, the group also agreed that the ability of school personnel to implement positive approaches to discipline is complicated by the increasing demands being placed on them. We singled out the following three demands as major challenges facing educational personnel in their efforts to implement proactive approaches to discipline: the increasing demands for academic achievement and high-stakes testing; the complexity of students' behavior; and the lack of trained, qualified personnel.

The group initially discussed the fact that schools were being asked to increase standards for academic achievement and accountability through high-stakes testing. Destefano, Shriner, and Lloyd (2001) noted that over the past 10 years, use of standardized testing has increased dramatically and students are required to pass more intense district and state testing. We all agreed that the intense focus on academic accountability and high-stakes testing are added stressors for general and special educators. The participants agreed that this policy shift has resulted in a narrowing of the curriculum and increased pressure on teachers to "teach to the test."

Discussion revealed general agreement that academic achievement is important, but that many students with challenging behaviors require differentiated instruction and an expanded curriculum to be successful in school. Many of the participants lamented that teachers rarely match instructional strategies to the needs of individual students. The group struggled with the paradox that school personnel are being asked to increase students' academic performance while simultaneously expanding the curriculum to address social and emotional development and to provide comprehensive services to students who are most in need. High standards and high-stakes testing without appropriate supports, the group concluded, would lead to more students with challenging behaviors failing or dropping out of school.

We discussed the fact that schools are faced with the added challenge of educating a population of students that is becoming increasingly more culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse. These demographic shifts in the student population give teachers the additional job of understanding many diverse cultures. We agreed this demand is further complicated by the fact that the negative behavior of some students is becoming more severe and their needs increasingly complex. Despite national data indicating an overall decrease in violent acts in school over the past few years, some group members commented that violence, cruelty toward others, bullying, and manipulation were on the rise in their schools.

There was general agreement that family, school, and societal factors strongly influence student behavior. Group members were keenly aware of social learning theory as it relates to aggression in particular. We discussed a number of the causal factors associated with conduct disorders outlined by Patterson and his colleagues (Patterson, Reid, & Dishion, 1992), including temperamental characteristics, poor parenting, exposure to violence, peer rejection, and academic failure. Group members commented at length that a great deal of student stress is caused by a lack of structure and supervision in the home and unpredictability outside of school. Participants acknowledged that children who are exposed to frequent acts of violence and aggression often begin to believe that these behaviors are socially acceptable (Myles & Simpson, 1998), which further complicates matters for school personnel.

Next, we discussed the reality that some parents are unable to cope with the demands of parenting and are ill equipped to manage the behavior of their children without support. The challenges of linking families to services and navigating the complex organizational structures of differing organizations that sometimes have conflicting and/or competing goals were identified as barriers to parents' obtaining support. In addition, we identified problems associated with time schedules and systems of accountability (Woodruff et al., 1998). We agreed that the more students, families, and educators struggle with these complicated issues, the more difficult it becomes for teachers to meet students' emotional and academic needs (Brownell & Walther-Thomas, 2001).

We also discussed the problems stemming from a nationwide shortage of teachers and trained, qualified personnel in the field of special education (Council for Exceptional Children, 2001). Participants commented on the difficulty their school districts were experiencing in recruiting and retaining individuals who are effective with students with significant behavioral challenges. Consistent with national trends, several group members commented that teaching positions in their districts were staffed with uncertified personnel and that many general educators received little or no training in managing the complex behavior of many of their students. Moreover, group members indicated that both special and general educators were feeling overwhelmed by the number of students with challenging behaviors being placed in their classrooms or on their caseloads.

There was consensus in the group that teachers without specific training were more likely to rely on punitive, reactive approaches to discipline—such as immediate referral to the office for minor misbehavior—than were their peers with training. We know that without proper staff development and administrative support it is extremely difficult to teach students with behavior problems effectively. Moreover, participants acknowledged that some teachers were unable to disengage from power struggles with their students—especially their adolescent students. According to some group members, this lack of skill in deescalating behavior often exacerbated the problem and, on occasion, resulted in triggering acts of aggression. Long (1995) has described the escalating conflict cycle that results in counteraggression, and techniques for deescalation have been suggested by Muscott (1995) and Walker, Colvin, and Ramsey (1995).

The group concluded that students with challenging behaviors require highly trained, caring professionals

39 BEST COPY AVAILABLE

who engage in collaborative practices and have specific expertise on the nature of students with challenging behaviors and strategies that promote their school success. Fortunately, research suggests that a coordinated, collaborative approach to training can enhance teachers' knowledge and skills in working with these young people (Cheney, Barringer, Upham, & Manning, 1996).

Using School Personnel to Make Accommodations and Modifications to Promote Student Success

It is critical for special educators to build caring, trusting, and respectful relationships with both students and general educators. To meet the increasing demand for services to students with challenging behaviors, professionals are finding it beneficial to collaborate, pool their resources, and coordinate assistance in a system of care (Skiba, Polsgrove, & Nasstrom, 1996). Our group agreed that the general educator has a daunting number of responsibilities in today's classroom that sometimes include coteaching with colleagues. We discussed the fact that collaborative teaching can support classroom teachers in four different ways: consulting teacher services, cooperative teaching in the classroom, supportive resource programs, and instructional assistants (Idol, 1997). Regardless of the activity, group members agreed that collaboration requires a realistic appraisal of needs, mutual classroom ownership, and follow-through on participant commitments. Additional aspects of successful collaboration discussed by the group included active listening, common planning time, modeling interventions, data-driven approaches, and strong leadership from the principal or program administrator.

We examined the fact that accommodations and modifications are similar, but not identical, concepts (Nolet & McLaughlin, 2000). *Accommodations* refer to services or supports that help students with disabilities to access the general education curriculum. They do not typically change the content of instruction or student performance expectations. Common accommodations include changes in the way information is presented to students; changes in the way students demonstrate learning; and content enhancements such as visual displays, study guides, or peer-mediated instruction. In contrast, modifications refer to actual adjustments in either the curriculum or expected student performance. Common modifications include teaching less or different content and requiring students with disabilities to master less information than their general education peers.

There was unanimity among the group members that an efficient way for school personnel to promote student success would be to develop and implement accommodations and modifications based on individual student needs. The consensus was that many students with challenging behaviors might benefit from differentiated instruction, peer mediation, cooperative learning experiences, and direct instruction in social skills or affective education. Whether teachers are willing to expand and individualize their instructional practices or not, they must realize the negative impact of ineffective practices on student performance. Group members agreed that classroom environments in which students experience academic failure, punitive discipline, rejection/isolation from peers, or public humiliation hinder the progress of collaborative services for students and potentially exacerbate the emotional problems of youth.

One group member raised the issue of "withitness." Kounin (1977) has described an inherent classroom withitness, in the absence of which teachers will experience decreased control and students will feel increased tension in the classroom. We agreed that behavior can be reshaped with positive reinforcement, relevant curriculum, and effective instructional practices for people of any age and that teachers, as well as students, need to see replacement behaviors as a more effective way to meet students' needs in the classroom. Group members commented on the need to reinforce and thereby strengthen positive behaviors by "catching" colleagues, as well as students, "being good."

Group members also shared their thoughts on the benefits of teaming and proactive approaches to student discipline. In general, the discussion centered on the themes of enhancing teachers' capacity through professional development opportunities and providing support throughout the change process. The following key items emerged during our discussions:

- General education teachers need training in proactive discipline approaches and differentiated instruction as urgently as do special educators.
- Teachers must use strategies that work for students instead of relying on techniques just because they are common or preferred.
- Teachers must see that the benefits of changing their teaching outweigh the risks.
- Teachers must be rewarded for taking risks and changing instructional practices to meet the needs of diverse learners.
- Along with a basis of respect for students' varying needs, paraprofessionals coming into special education need adequate training prior to and after they begin to work with students.
- Collaboration needs to be proactive and ongoing, rather than merely a problem-driven process.

The discussion group celebrated the fact that many students with challenging behaviors are being recognized as intelligent and academically capable. However, some expressed concern that the push for high academic standards may inadvertently decrease behavioral success for students with challenging behaviors. We all agreed that effective instruction prevents behavior problems and a collaborative effort is the key to success.

Promoting Student Success Through High-Quality Behavioral Intervention Plans

The 1997 Amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) require the individualized education program (IEP) team to explore the need for strategies and supports to address any problem behavior that impedes either the learning of the child with a disability or the learning of peers. Moreover, when school personnel impose certain disciplinary conditions on a student with a disability, the IEP team is required, within 10 days, to formulate a functional behavioral assessment (FBA) to collect data to develop, review, and, if necessary, revise a behavioral intervention plan (BIP) to ensure that it addresses the behavior upon which the disciplinary action was predicated.

The group members agreed that the schools in which they work are responding to these mandates by developing a process for generating FBAs and creating BIPs. However, consistent with the findings of Conroy, Katsiyannis, Clark, Gable, and Fox (2002), a number of the participants indicated there were problems with implementation that had yet to be fully addressed. Further discussion identified the following challenges to the creation of high-quality BIPs:

- A lack of trained personnel with the necessary expertise for combining and integrating the various parts of the process into a cohesive plan.
- Overreliance on consequences for misbehavior, rather than prevention and differentiated instruction.
- A continued focus on "one-size-fits-all" interventions in general and interventions that are matched to the identified underlying function of behavior in particular.
- Inconsistent implementation of strategies delineated in the plans.

In spite of these limitations, we reached consensus on several points about BIPs that are supported by the literature. First, a BIP is a written set of intervention strategies designed to either decrease the problem behavior or increase the prosocial behavior of the offending student. Second, the BIP should be based on the FBA and the resulting hypothesis statements regarding the function of the student's behavior (Jolivette, Barton-Arwood, & Scott, 2000). Group members agreed that using the results of an FBA to develop interventions is a valuable approach because it relies on looking beyond surface behavior to the underlying causes of the behavior (Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice, 1998). Third, once the underlying motivations for problem behavior are identified and verified, a BIP should be developed to address the underlying causes, rather than the surface behavior. Group members voiced concern that some teachers do not put much stock in the idea of a replacement behavior and would rather just try to suppress the behavior through punishments. Others indicated that when plans address underlying motivations and reasonable replacement behaviors, behavior does indeed change for the better. The latter view is consistent with the analysis by Gable and Hendrickson (2000), who noted that research supports the conclusion that students are more likely to cease misbehavior when interventions are designed to promote a replacement behavior that "more effectively and efficiently satisfies the same need." (p. 287)

There was general agreement that the development of a high-quality BIP results from gathering and analyzing data from multiple sources and engaging in a collaborative process among the stakeholders. One discussant described her success with a process whereby plans were developed with the full input and participation of all team members, including parents. Others noted a less-than-ideal process in which data were limited and participation cursory, at best. One participant shared an example we hope does not happen anywhere else: "In my schools it [i.e., the BIP] is done in a few minutes, and then referrals are written." We acknowledged that we have a long way to go before the field as a whole embraces the best-practice approach. The discussion led us to identify a number of strategies for involving a greater number of contributors in developing plans that will be implemented faithfully:

- Develop relationships with school personnel and family members outside the context of disciplinary infractions.
- Reduce the use of professional jargon and speak in the language of teachers and family members.
- Gain an understanding and appreciation of the cultural differences of team members and interact respectfully.
- Seek to understand the differing motivations and interests of each of the participants.

- Identify common interests among the different participants and act upon those interests.
- Spend time in each other's classrooms so that interventions discussed and developed are feasible.
- Develop relevant replacement behaviors.
- Incorporate the knowledge and expertise of all of the stakeholders.
- Involve the various stakeholders in joint training activities.

We know that in creating an effective intervention plan to address problem behavior, the IEP team should consider positive strategies, program or curriculum modifications, and supplementary aids and supports (Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice, 1998). The group spent considerable time discussing the elements of an effective BIP. Many of the strategies highlighted during the discussion were consistent with those identified by Sugai, Lewis-Palmer, and Hagan-Burke (1999–2000):

- Teaching the desired and alternative replacement behaviors to compete with occurrences of problem behavior.
- Manipulating antecedent events that decrease the likelihood of problem behavior and increase the probability of desired and alternative replacement behaviors.
- Manipulating consequence events to discourage problem behavior and encourage desired replacement behaviors.
- Eliminating setting events or neutralizing the impact of setting events.
- Preventing and responding to emergency or crisis situations.
- Monitoring the implementation effectiveness and impact of the plan on student behavior.

Conclusion

Participants in this 2-day working forum agreed that schools must embrace positive, proactive approaches to serve students with challenging behaviors adequately. Appropriate service delivery is dependent upon a highly trained group of educators who collaborate effectively in the implementation of best-practice approaches. We also identified some of the major challenges faced by public school personnel, including high-stakes testing, which results in a narrowing of the curriculum, and the demographic shift in student populations, which necessitates cultural competency. In addition, we examined some of the correlates of challenging behaviors, including ineffective teaching, poor parenting, exposure to violence, peer rejection, and temperamental characteristics. To respond successfully to these challenges, educators must use supports that are based upon the individual needs of the student.

As a group, we felt strongly that behavioral intervention plans that are developed via a collaborative process are a key component in assisting children and adolescents with challenging behavior. These plans can be effective vehicles that address the underlying causes of problem behavior and promote prosocial replacement behaviors. These positive supports were seen by group members as much more efficacious than reactive and/or punitive measures.

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Improving School Climate: Moving from "Your Kids" to "Our Kids"

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The multiple perspectives of members of our discussion group provided a unique insight regarding how proactive approaches are faring in the schools. Participants expressed the feeling that school officials who supported the participation of personnel in this forum are more likely than others to be either involved in proactive approaches or open to change in disciplinary practices. However, many of the group members were seeking ways to overcome barriers to redefining the current educational scene from reactive to proactive approaches to discipline and instruction. We hope that what follows captures the essence of the points that our colleagues felt were critical to that discussion.

Behavioral Issues in the Schools

We began our discussion by exploring trends in the schools that have implications for improving the school environment for students with emotional or behavioral disorders (E/BD). Members of the discussion group shared some of the major challenges they experienced in their districts and communities. These challenges largely related to changing student demographics, accountability issues, safe schools efforts, and the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education.

Participants identified the rapidly changing nature of the school-age population as one phenomenon to which schools are attempting to respond. Many schools are struggling to address the educational and social needs of an increasing number of students with diverse language and cultural backgrounds. In addition, the medical and mental health needs of some students and their families place increasing demands on local schools and communities. At the same time, school districts, communities, and states find that their resources are stretched and they must establish priorities that anger or disappoint many in the schools. Services that address the diverse needs of the students with whom we work are being subjected to cutbacks or outright elimination.

While we emphatically support efforts that enhance academic excellence in our schools, when academic outcomes are at the expense of the emotional and social development of students with challenging behaviors, we protest! Care must be taken that students with labels such as being *at-risk* or having a *behavioral disorder* are not perceived as roadblocks to achieving academic excellence for the general student population.

There is widespread confusion and considerable controversy about what constitutes an appropriate consequence for a student with a disability who "acts up" in school. Group members agreed that school security efforts have increased significantly in recent years, as administrators and parents attempt to ensure the safety of the students. Given the current climate, students who evidence poor self-control, social skill deficits, or aggression become known as "troublemakers"; temporary or permanent removal from the school is too often the accepted remedy.

At the same time, schools struggle to find ways to fully include students with disabilities in general education settings. The most common challenges include providing individualized accommodations, supporting teachers with paraprofessionals and consultants, and creating collaborative teaching relationships among general and special educators. Some school districts are

willing and able to dedicate needed resources to accomplish these tasks, while others seem resistant, especially when students require extensive support and/or are disruptive.

In light of these challenges, it is understandable that forum participants were motivated to attend by the desire to discover more effective ways to address problems associated with the education of students with challenging behaviors. Mirroring problems nationwide, our concerns tended to revolve around the issues of the individual student, the collaborative team, and schoolwide practices.

The first set of issues we focused on related to the student whose behaviors are perceived as interfering with the education of the larger student body. Most of these issues pertained to the school personnel's perceptions of the student and the development of appropriate interventions and supports:

- Excessive use of suspensions to address behaviors.
- Students associated with labels and past performance.
- Punitive approaches to behavior intervention.
- Failure to identify and provide appropriate interventions.
- Students not prepared for transitions and inclusion.

The second set of issues focused on individual teaching skills and collaborative relationships among educators working with students with challenging behaviors. Several participants stressed that the ability of the teachers to analyze the impact of their behavior on student behavior was critical to producing positive changes. Discussion about collaboration emphasized how these relationships can ensure the success or failure of inclusion efforts. The issues discussed included the following:

- Resistance to change among school staff (e.g., "We know what to do. Now, how do we get staff to change?").
- High turnover of special education teachers.
- Uncertified teachers; lack knowledge of methodology.
- General education teachers who are not ready for inclusion.
- Ill-defined roles of team members.

The third set of issues related to school policies and systems that impact students with challenging behaviors—students with and without labels. It was apparent during our discussions that many in our group were experiencing frustration in providing supports to their students and that some elements were missing from the service delivery system. The problems mentioned included:

- Limited early intervention and prevention plans.
- Lack of systems for reintegrating students (e.g., self-contained to general education).
- Lack of systems for helping students make the transition from other settings (e.g., residential treatment or juvenile justice back into the school environment).
- Out-of-school suspension policies.
- Identification and implementation of best practices.

We recognized that many of these issues are interrelated, with some probable cause-and-effect relationships. Finally, group members asserted that we would be remiss if we failed to point out that some schools and districts were experiencing success in their efforts to meet the diverse learning and behavioral needs of their students through individual, collaborative, and schoolwide efforts.

The goals our group identified focus on prevention and intervention. Consistent with the accumulated literature, we agreed that early identification of children who are at risk for developing E/BD is critical. If we want to see increased success, then intervening when children are in preschool and early elementary school is imperative. As students progress through the grades, negative experiences accumulate and problems multiply and diversify. If these problems go unabated, increasingly more intrusive and intensive interventions will be needed. Finally, goals for the individual student include both improved social adjustment and academic performance.

That social skills development was seen by our group as a primary goal for students with challenging behaviors is certainly no surprise. For a student to be accepted in educational settings, she or he will need to develop skills to gain teacher approval and peer acceptance. Students with behavioral challenges benefit from overlapping academic and nonacademic instruction to develop self-management and interpersonal skills. Our group agreed that working with students to demonstrate positive social skills across settings is a continuing challenge.

While academics are emphasized for the general student population, academic skills too often take a back seat to the classroom conduct of students with E/BD. Unfortunately, because of their repeated frustration and failure, the educational setting is often an aversive environment for these students. For them to succeed—both behaviorally and academically—it is essential that educators find ways to promote positive academic

engagement that can provide opportunities for these students to be motivated, challenged, and successful.

The purpose of providing support for students with E/BD is so that they may become empowered to self-manage their behavior and have equal access to educational opportunities. The ultimate goal is to ensure that students have social and academic experiences that lead not only to positive outcomes, but also to integration into the larger community as contributing, fulfilled adults.

Using School Personnel to Make Accommodations and Modifications to Promote Student Success

The challenges surrounding improving the working relationship between special education and general education brought to mind the saying "You can catch more flies with honey than you can with vinegar!" Group members offered various recommendations for improving the quality of student support by improving the relationships between general educators and the special educators who are providing that support, whether in settings that employ behavior specialists, collaboration models, consultation, or coteaching. The recommendations included the following:

- Market the kids—talk about their strengths!
- Share noninstructional duties (e.g., lunch, recess, bus) equally.
- Listen to each other; be empathetic regarding the challenges of colleagues.
- Periodically take responsibility for a general educator's classroom for a class period.
- Eat in the teachers' lounge and use that opportunity to increase professional bonding by sharing both personal and professional interests.
- Praise student *and teacher* success.
- Provide colleagues with practical suggestions for accommodations that are easy to implement for multiple students in general education inclusive classrooms.

In concert with the improvement of relationships among colleagues comes a closer scrutiny of the models of collaboration that are being considered or are already in place in our schools. We were fortunate to have educators in our group who had positive experiences with coteaching. The coteaching partnerships of group members were predicated on mutual trust, respect, and responsibility; special education teachers were not viewed as "assistants" supporting students in the general education setting. There was some discussion about the consultant model and the value of the consultant being someone in house who is able to provide an added degree of continuity and stability for students and staff. Several in the group expressed interest in an enlarged role for behavior interventionists and the supportive role of these educators, especially as it relates to early identification and intervention. It is no surprise that providing adequate time for support staff to work directly with teachers is a challenge in most schools. However, we were in full agreement that if school personnel are going to shift from reactive to proactive approaches to discipline and instruction, support is essential.

We cannot emphasize enough how critical a well-functioning team is to the success of students with E/BD. The team is instrumental in creating a positive learning environment by preparing the students and the receiving teachers, providing direct instruction and support as students face the challenge of adjusting to new settings, and routinely interacting with the students and faculty to troubleshoot and resolve academic and nonacademic problems, thereby increasing the chance of sustained success.

Group members also emphasized the importance of bringing parents onto the support team along with school personnel. They shared ideas for contacting parents in positive ways—such as letting them know when their child was doing well—rather than contributing to parent aversion to school contact. (We can hardly fault weary parents who might resort to checking caller ID before answering a call.)

Promoting Student Success Through High-Quality Behavioral Intervention Plans (Systems of Positive Behavior Support)

Our discussion group was in agreement that district-wide commitment to improving the school climate and school–community relationships is a promising trend. We were very enthusiastic about the ideas presented by others at the forum (see monograph article by Anthony Moriarty). We agreed with the practice of serving students who have violated school rules in the school setting rather than suspending them. There is little evidence that suspension is an effective intervention; it only enables students to hang out with others in out-of-school settings and to increase their behavioral problems. Our group expressed interest in the plan to have students complete what were described as *social skills modules.*

Regardless of the intervention plan, we did recognize that there are myriad problems associated with systems

change. Research and experience show that it takes several years for a school to fully implement a systematic, school-wide program of positive behavioral supports. School-wide positive behavioral support systems have the potential to address the dual demands for safety and academic excellence in the schools. Data are collected in areas such as behavior incidents, office referrals, truancy, and reading and other academic scores. Being able to anticipate positive academic and nonacademic changes would certainly be a powerful motivator for schools to consider implementing school-wide models. Even so, district-wide systems change can be overwhelming to contemplate. A member of our group related how a single school in their district was selected that was enthusiastic about embracing positive behavior supports. This school will serve as a model for other schools in the district to adopt a proactive approach to discipline and instruction.

Our group agreed that the transition from behavioral intervention to positive behavioral support provides an opportunity to impact attitudes and practices. While the term intervention appears to have become associated with punishment, the term support connotes a proactive team approach. We know that terminology is important and often has an impact on attitudes. The judicious use of functional behavioral assessment (FBA) as part of a proactive approach to discipline and instruction provides an opportunity for school personnel to explore the behavior of the student in relation to peers and adults. Equally important, it affords an opportunity for teachers and others to evaluate critically their interactions with students and try new approaches to solving learning and behavior problems.

Finally, the consensus of our group was that a critical need exists for systematic support for both students with challenging behaviors and the personnel who provide services for these students. Students reentering an academic setting or moving from setting to setting benefit from a system that supports their needs for safety and security. As one member of our group put it, students need a "tether" approach, a system for temporarily returning to a safe and familiar environment when the stress in the new academic setting becomes too great.

Conclusion

The importance of administrative commitment emerged as key to the success of school-wide implementation and maintenance of support systems for students with challenging behaviors. School personnel must be given assurance that systems change will survive leadership changes. For systems to change, we need to advocate for the application of research-based interventions and early identification of children who are at risk for E/BD. Partnerships with parents of young children can be built by providing support and creating opportunities for positive communication.

Educators working with students with challenging behaviors should evaluate the reintegration and transition models that are in place in their schools. There should be clearly defined personnel responsibilities and a commitment to maintaining and improving support systems.

Furthermore, collaborative relationships are essential to creating a positive school environment. In most instances, significant, ongoing training must be provided for all school personnel. And, school officials must build partnerships with community agencies and work toward shared resources in order to create a seamless array of service options. In that high-quality interactions among teachers and students are prerequisite to promoting positive affiliation and academic success for students with challenging behaviors, stakeholders must continually strive to provide more effective programs for students.

Recommended Resources

Michigan Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services. (2000). *Positive behavior support for ALL Michigan students: Creating environments that assure learning* [Electronic version]. Retrieved March 15, 2002, from http://www.mde.state.mi.us/off/sped/LIBRARY/DUE_PROCESS/PositiveBehvSuptExSum.pdf

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Practicing an Ethos of Care: Laying a Foundation for School-Wide Proactive Approaches

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Proof that big things come in small packages was evidenced in a recent dialog among a diverse group of professionals at the recent CCBD Forum on Positive Academic and Behavioral Supports. A small, but energetic group of special educators, vocational educators, program coordinators, counselors, university professors, and principals came together to critically and constructively examine current school-wide approaches to working with students with challenging behaviors.

Over the course of the forum, participants discussed a range of issues in practical and realistic terms and brainstormed solutions in a hopeful manner. A sense emerged that just as our nation is at a critical crossroads of change, as educators of students with challenging behaviors, we have a unique opportunity to draw upon the support, tools, and momentum created by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (IDEA '97) to provide successful academic and behavioral outcomes for students with challenging behaviors. A true ethos of care, which has brought this nation together, can and should serve to guide educators as we navigate the waters of uncertainty and change.

Behavioral Issues in the Schools

Demands and Response

Demand, as defined by Merriam-Webster (1996), is any urgent requirement or need. For teachers facing a succession of educational reforms, there is little room for misinterpretation of the definition when discussing the nature of their daily demands. When asked to reflect on the many requirements placed on schools today and how districts are responding to those demands, little time elapsed before group participants responded with an almost urgent riposte. Standardized testing, inclusive education, diversity of student populations, and time constraints have placed increasing demands on teachers (Van Acker, 2002). Participants delineated various daily challenges. They indicated that standards of learning, increased pressure for accountability, higher academic expectations, lack of fully qualified teachers, paperwork demands, large caseloads, increasing student diversity, and changes in federal legislation (i.e., IDEA '97) have placed extraordinary demands on schools. Striking a balance between academic and nonacademic instruction has and will continue to be a challenge for all educators.

In addition to demands on schools, the intersection of so-called "zero-tolerance" policies regarding behavior and the push for general classroom inclusion has placed new demands on students with challenging behaviors. Students must now learn to interact socially with one another, share materials and space, and perform publicly (Van Acker, 2002). For students who require behavioral accommodations, disciplinary policies and practices may be enforced unfairly and with little flexibility. Participants agreed that general education classrooms may be more inclusive, but their structure may be poorly aligned with the needs of students from special education classrooms. An ongoing issue in the field of emotional or behavioral disorders (E/BD) that was reaffirmed by participants is the high rate of student academic failure. Students are choosing not to complete work, they are sleeping in class, and are preoccupied with issues unrelated to the classroom. Dissonance between school and home cultural expectations create uncertainty as well. In other words, students in general and those with E/BD in particular are becoming more alienated from the school environment

since it appears to be meeting fewer and fewer of their needs. Participants expressed an additional concern that a growing number of parents are opting for charter schools, which may not be designed to adequately address the needs of students with E/BD.

Critical Issues and Behavior

Considerable discussion focused on previously reported demands placed on school districts, teachers, and students. Critical issues surrounding these demands emerged from the group. With an increase in high-stakes testing and standards of learning have come higher academic expectations for all students. By virtue of inclusion, expectations of appropriate behavior and academic achievement have increased for all students with disabilities. Unfortunately, many teachers are ill prepared to deal with the diversity of disabilities, academic levels, and behavior while seeking to satisfy accountability standards. Discussion within the group led to the identification of the most critical issues related to these demands:

- State assessment demands have created a conflict between the special education and general education curriculums, specifically individualized education program (IEP) goals versus a curriculum driven by tests.
- Inclusion has raised the bar for social skills and behavioral expectations, while zero-tolerance policies and increased academic demands on teachers lessen the time given to teach behavioral and social skills.
- Rigidity in classroom structure and instruction allows little flexibility for differential teaching and learning.
- IEPs should include more social and behavioral goals, objectives, and support programs.
- Wraparound services are limited, and implementation is hindered by inadequate funding; lack of time; and communication problems among agencies, schools, and parents.
- Special educators have limited opportunity to meet the various demands of sustaining effective inclusive classroom instruction.
- There is a lack of understanding about the nature and impact of social/emotional behaviors by both general and special educators.
- The complexity of society requires students to become prematurely independent, even though they lack the prerequisite skills. Technology affords students immediate gratification and encourages social isolation, resulting in a decline in social interaction and social learning.

Goals for Intervention and Prevention

A long-term goal of creating an ethos of care became the resounding theme and hope for the group members. Short-term intervention and long-term prevention will require great resolve and commitment. Collectively, the participants agreed that our goal as educators is to teach children who are intrinsically motivated, able to cope and thrive in general education, and working at or above grade level. Unfortunately, these are rarely the characteristics associated with students with E/BD. Notwithstanding the challenges, children should be taught the social tools necessary for success. They should have the tools to take what they learn and apply it to their personal experience and life by learning the basic concepts, capturing the essence of the subject matter, and generalizing relevant information across settings. Relevant curriculum and adequate resources should be available to all students. For students with E/BD to be successful learners, we must actively target and change maladaptive behaviors and teach new behaviors. We believe it will take more academic support, improved curriculum, and better-prepared teachers and paraeducators to accomplish that goal.

Short- or long-term goals should include an increased level of competency for general and special educators accomplished through high-quality teacher preparation programs and professional development activities. Several participants suggested that there be dual preparation between general and special educators and that time spent in professional development activities should include hands-on, field-based experiences with students. We must lower teacher turnover rates and increase the quality of their knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Together, these efforts may increase student access to general education and lessen reliance on pull-out programs for students with E/BD.

Utilizing School Personnel to Make Accommodations and Modifications to Promote Student Success

With IDEA '97, students with disabilities have greater access to the general education classroom and curriculum than before. However, students with E/BD are still the least desired of the disability categories and the last to be placed in inclusive settings (Kea & Teaff, 2000).

For students with challenging behavior, instructional accommodations, curricular modifications, and IEPs are the sine qua non for success in the general education classroom—in other words, the elements that set the stage for successful outcomes. School personnel should be prepared to make modifications to the learning environment, vary teaching strategies, and provide services that afford students opportunities to perform essential functions (Hazelkorn, 2002). Participants suggested that most general educators are now aware of recent federal legislation and its mandates; even so, students with challenging behaviors are not fully benefiting from these mandates for various reasons.

Participants' greatest concern was a lack of common vision among school personnel related to positive behavioral supports (PBS), behavioral intervention plans, and IEPs. Additional concerns voiced by members of the group centered around dispositions, perceptions, and preparation levels of educators, as well as varying support for collaboration and the attention given to group individualization of instruction. In a positive vein, group members had little trouble agreeing on what is needed to ensure the implementation of critical academic and behavioral accommodations and modifications for students with E/BD.

Participants were in agreement that a need exists for a systematic philosophy regarding behavioral accommodations and PBS. PBS provides a systems approach to behavior using interventions to achieve socially important behavior change (Sugai, Horner, & Sprague, 1999). Group members highlighted the necessity of reaffirming the efficacy of PBS as an alternative to the use of punitive consequences schools have long embraced. Initial uncertainty regarding appropriate use of functional behavioral assessments and behavioral intervention plans has begun to decline, as school personnel gain experience in the process. There is considerable concern, however, over implementation and evaluation associated with functional behavioral assessments. Several in the group suggested that implementation may be improved if teams examine the behaviors listed on the behavioral intervention plan, and, when the plan does not match new behaviors, take steps to find effective interventions beyond those listed. Participants generally believed that the majority of educators support inclusion of students with E/BD but spend a majority of their time dealing with behavior problems of students without disabilities, which leaves little time for students with E/BD.

For students with E/BD to access the general education curriculum as successfully as their peers, various curricular and instructional accommodations and modifications are required (Mathur, Nelson, & Rutherford, 1998). Participants doubted the current feasibility of these practices. Significant discussion centered on the perceptions, dispositions, and roles of general educators in the modification and accommodation of classroom instruction. Several in the group cited examples of possible misperceptions of their colleagues. For some general educators, role identity does not include teaching students with disabilities. Teachers may have received sparse or inconsistent training involving the inclusion of students with special needs, which would understandably evoke feelings of inadequacy. For others, the concept of fairness associated with uniformity is a barrier to making instructional accommodations. Finally, the group pointed to the enormous importance placed on standardized tests, citing lack of time to inclusively prepare, teach, and modify instruction. In addition, there may be a misperception that students with E/BD are low functioning and cannot benefit from general classroom instruction.

As special educators, we feel confident that students are being taught the necessary cognitive strategies that enable them to succeed in the general education classroom. What may be lacking is time to share successful techniques and strategies collaboratively with colleagues. It is imperative that administrators take a leadership role by providing high-quality staff development to better prepare general educators and setting aside time for regular collaboration between general and special educators. Time provided for both increases the likelihood that positive alliances will be formed that will benefit general and special educators and their students.

Establishing Alliances and Emerging Best Practices

It is well established that school personnel who share a common school-wide vision and philosophy are more successful in meeting the needs of all students (Tonelson & Butler, 2000). Indeed, collaboration among educators is essential to meeting the needs of students with E/BD (Bullock & Gable, 1997). Participants were resolute that both a common vision and collaboration are necessary. A common vision among special and general educators is necessary to establish collaborative alliances and to work toward positive outcomes for students with E/BD. Successful collaboration is predicated on a common vision as well. Special educators must be clear about the direction of their program and must be unafraid to initiate collaboration.

We discussed the fact that few school professionals have received appropriate staff development with regard to their roles and responsibilities in collaboration (Korinek, 2000; Wood, 1998). School personnel can build collaborative bridges if they receive support from administrators and if effective teaching strategies and team problem-solving techniques are included in

teacher preparation programs. While acknowledging that collaboration is no easy undertaking, participants offered a number of suggestions for promoting a positive working relationship between special and general educators:

- Offer high-quality staff development, based on a building-level needs assessment initiated by proactive administrators.
- Provide opportunities for general and special educators to attend professional development and/or training sessions together.
- Ask general and special educators to switch jobs for a day (or a portion of the day) to examine the other side.
- Apportion ample time for joint staffing and curriculum planning.
- Delineate specific expectations for students and teachers in general education.
- Incorporate a unified approach to discipline, rules, consequences, and rewards (i.e., do away with "fun Friday" type activities just for students with E/BD and include them in school-wide rewards).
- Create consistency within each department involved in collaborative efforts.
- Set up specific staffing procedures prior to transition into general education classes.
- Have general and special educators view in action one another's instructional content, enhancement routines, and strategies.
- Develop relationships with the general education teachers who are most accepting of students with E/BD, and provide them with meaningful support and recognition.
- Have general educators meet the students on the students' "turf" before integration into the general classroom.
- Share after-school tutoring by general and regular educators.
- Share instructional materials and other resources between general and special educators.
- Use a variety of coteaching and inclusion models that maximize personnel and abilities.
- Share the responsibility of meeting and communicating with parents.
- Share ownership of all students.

Innovative Partnerships

Schools are increasingly turning to natural community networks to establish a true ethos of care when working with students. Participants cited a number of innovative outreach efforts being used by schools. Community partners such as Big Brothers, Big Sisters, Boy Scouts, Boys and Girls Club, sororities, churches, and community centers are being utilized in a wrap-around effort that has in the past, been somewhat inconsistent. Sponsors from various community groups are being used as contacts and surrogates when parents and guardians are unavailable. Schools are increasingly encouraging outreach and involvement among churches and as a result, churches and other faith-based organizations are starting to revisit available services and how they are provided to families. There is little doubt that these types of grass-roots efforts and natural community networks are powerful stakeholders in the lives of students.

Traditionally, partnerships in schools have existed primarily with businesses, but a number of partnerships with institutions of higher education have emerged. Some participants expressed ongoing concern that while business partnerships are welcomed and provide needed tangible assistance and job opportunities for students, many business unions are not "hands-on in nature." In one hands-on approach to collaboration, North Carolina A&T State University School of Education faculty members partner with schools and assist in supervising students in the halls and consulting with teachers and special education departments. The special education faculty is working with school personnel on ways to conduct responsible inclusion. A partnership of this type provides unlimited dividends for all involved.

Participants questioned traditional school/business partnerships, with examples given from states with high percentages of senior citizens. In these states, businesses often utilize seniors in lieu of hiring special education students for low-paying jobs and volunteering opportunities. A viable solution may be creative partnerships with vocational rehabilitation services. Dual enrollment in general education and vocational schools is also becoming more common. Other school districts are contracting with local mental health agencies and private providers to deliver related services such as counseling and therapy. A few innovative school divisions have initiated in-district training programs in the area of hotel/motel management, art, and technology, to name just a few. Unfortunately, the group discussants reported that more high-tech programs tend to exclude students with disabilities.

In addition to school/business partnerships in the area of job training and career planning, many schools have tapped businesses to support school-wide behavior systems by providing tangible items for rewards. Still other districts draw upon business employees for mentoring and tutoring programs. Discussants shared one example of a creative method of recruiting retired teachers from mobile home and retirement communi-

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ties to provide morning, afternoon, and summer tutoring and mentoring services free of charge. Districts with military bases in the vicinity are forming partnerships to provide tutoring and social skills instruction to students with E/BD. Regardless of the nature of the partnership, participants agreed that when planning work and career training and transition services for students with challenging behaviors, all agencies and resources should be included at the planning table to maximize opportunities for students.

Promoting Student Success Through High-Quality Behavioral Intervention Plans

School-Wide and District-Wide Best Practices

Participants confirmed that, although it is a slow and arduous process, many schools now incorporate district-wide and school-wide PBS, resulting in functional behavioral assessments and behavioral intervention plans that are more individualized and functional. The intent of the inclusion of PBS in IDEA '97 as an approach to increasing the capacity of schools to design effective environments is now being realized by a growing number of schools. Participants pointed out that despite incorporation of school-wide supports, actual administration of PBS is somewhat inconsistent, perhaps because of the recency of such programs. Even so, the success of PBS requires a consistent employment of common practices among all school staff, a proactive approach to dealing with behavior within and across settings, careful monitoring of adult and student performance, and shared decision making (Lewis, 2000). One admonition given by participants is that all too often current systems consist primarily of a "one-set-of-rules-and-consequences-for-all" mentality. In contrast, those schools with an approach that more accurately reflects the intent of IDEA '97 are using systems in which students, teachers, and staff are all stakeholders in the planning and implementation process. In these programs, students have input regarding rewards and consequences, thus making the system relevant to the needs of all stakeholders. Participants shared a number of examples of school-wide systems in use today:

- The Renaissance-One program, wherein attendance, tardies, absences, and homework are all tied to set goals for each student. All students have a chance to make positive changes, and progress in achieving individual goals is rewarded.
- Integrated school-wide social skills instruction.
- Level systems structured to afford students ways to learn about friends, family, interpersonal conflict resolution, and career opportunities.
- Positive reward systems using token economies for all students and specific programs to address more intense problem behaviors.

Under unified approaches, teachers, janitors, cafeteria workers, and other staff members are trained in the system and everyone understands the importance of consistency and common language used with students. PBS is a natural fit when considering the development of an ethos of care as student expectations and outcomes are clearly defined, the culture of both the school and the community is considered, and faculty and community members take ownership of PBS.

Ways to Involve Stakeholders in Positive Behavioral Supports

Integral to PBS is the appropriate use of functional behavioral assessments to build useful behavioral intervention plans for students who require more intensive intervention (Lewis, 2000). Our discussion quickly led to key issues surrounding functional behavioral assessments and behavioral intervention plans: What we do to promote each? How we provide high-quality training and accurate record and data keeping are among the most critical issues. Collection and analysis of various kinds of data is an arduous but necessary part of PBS. Unfortunately, teachers, social workers, administrators, and counselors do not always possess the knowledge or skills to keep accurate records, which undermines the integrity of the functional behavioral assessment and behavioral intervention plan process. Discussants agreed that more often than not, poor data collection is the norm and that steps must be taken to better prepare and support school personnel in that effort.

Appropriately involving necessary stakeholders in the functional behavioral assessment and behavioral intervention plan process will depend on systematic and consistent preparation by preservice teacher education programs, as well as school division inservice staff development.

Nation wide, professional development has suffered because of budget cuts. The missing piece is overall planning for training, implementation, and evaluation. The challenge remains. Schools must root out flawed and ineffective practices and misperceptions currently in place and replace them with more effective, efficient, and relevant practices based on the prioritized needs of target students (Gable, 2002). Unfortunately, there is no single blueprint that serves to spell out the process, so that many school personnel are left to muddle through sometimes conflicting information as to the

how, when, where, and why of functional behavioral assessments and behavioral intervention plans.

Improving Collaborative Relationships

Mirroring sentiments of colleagues across the country, we felt strongly about improving collaborative relationships across school, home, and community settings to ensure positive outcomes and the appropriate development and implementation of behavioral intervention plans for students with E/BD. The quickest way to build collaborative rapport suggested by participants is to follow through by doing what you say you will do. Teachers need to count on and trust one another. Administrators can build rapport with and among teachers by providing time for planning, meaningful staff development, and ongoing technical support. Furthermore, we must rid ourselves of the longstanding "us versus them" mentality between general and special educators. Collaboration under IDEA '97 can and should combine the special educator's knowledge of behavior management, learning strategies, cognitive intervention strategies, and authentic assessment with the general educator's expertise in curriculum, content knowledge, scope and sequence, and group assessment. Collaboration offers school personnel the chance to come together and capitalize on the wealth of knowledge and specialized training of both general and special educators (Wood, 1998). Careful planning, differentiated instruction, and shared decision-making responsibility can serve as the benchmark of successful school-wide systems.

School/family relationships can be built through improved communication, explaining rights, seeking parental input on IEPs and behavioral intervention plans, listening, and eliminating negative perceptions of differing norms and expectations. We must look for the strengths of the family, recognize and value cultural and linguistic diversity, and find ways to involve the family in the process. Participants highlighted a number of ways schools are involving parents:

- Parents volunteering as teacher for the day or helper.
- Monthly newsletters developed by students.
- Calls to parents once a week.
- In-class phones for prompt use (positive as well as punitive).
- E-mail and class Web sites.
- Home visits and worksite visits.

With the changes in student demographics and growing diversity within the school-age population, education personnel must now become cultural researchers, seeking information about students and their families that will allow us to support them. To connect culturally with families, educators must gain knowledge of cultures, values, beliefs, and differences; communicate effectively with families; and be culturally sensitive when developing group or individual interventions (Kea, 1997, 2002).

Conclusion

If we are committed to and sincere about creating an ethos of care for all students—including those with E/BD—we must ask ourselves some difficult questions and be willing to answer with appropriate action. Are we setting aside our preconceived ideas about students with E/BD? Do we have the commitment and structures in place to support effective school-wide systems and allow them to function? Are we using learning strategies, motivation techniques, and curricular accommodations that are meaningful, relevant, and interesting? Are we then individualizing instruction? Do teachers have the time, resources, and support necessary to be effective and to avoid burnout? Are we enthusiastic about what we are teaching? Are we willing to learn how to collaborate with other educators? Are we regularly seeking to build relationships with students, teachers, and families that show we care? Above all, the question is whether we are practicing an ethos of care for a highly challenging but very deserving population of students.

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The Academic/Behavioral Connection: Working Effectively with Students with Challenging Behaviors

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Behavioral Issues in the Schools

Today's schools face numerous challenges. There is a universal push for high-stakes testing based on a curriculum that is standards based. The school-age population is becoming increasingly more diverse. Schools are experiencing serious shortages of fully qualified personnel. The standard curriculum may not be appropriate in meeting the needs of students with disabilities, including those with emotional or behavioral problems. Due to the heavy emphasis on academic achievement, schools are sacrificing important nonacademic areas such as social skills instruction.

Educators face the burden of increased paperwork in the area of education that is the most litigious—special education. With budget cuts, educators are expected to do more for less. At a time when there are many career choices available to young people, salaries for educators have not met the competitive market, and as a result college students are not choosing education as a career. Furthermore, educators currently in the field are leaving for more lucrative positions, while many teachers close to retirement leave out of frustration over what is happening in the schools.

Schools are expected to do more to resolve society's problems. Children may not have sufficient clothing, so schools provide clothing. Children may not be fed at home, so some schools provide breakfast, lunch, and even dinner. Children may not be supervised at home, so schools provide after-school activities. The list is endless.

With the inclusion movement, special educators are expected not only to provide specially designed instruction, but also to collaborate with general education teachers to meet students' needs. To perform this task successfully, special educators must have a knowledge of the general education curriculum and the skills to deliver specially designed instruction.

While some districts are adopting new supports to meet these challenges, many schools have disenfranchised students through negative approaches such as academically unfriendly environments and punishment for inappropriate or unacceptable behaviors.

Although the challenges we face are formidable, we can meet these challenges. Just as we teach our children the value of hope, we must also have that sense of hope that we can do our part in meeting children's needs. Together, we can create a sense of optimism and sustain it with development of a plan of action to meet the needs of the students we serve. Just as we must teach students to replace negative behaviors with positive behaviors, we must also replace any negative mindsets of our own with positive, action-oriented behaviors that will make a difference in children's lives. A cornerstone of the Working Forum sponsored by the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders has been that we must look proactively for ways to make students academically successful while teaching them the social skills necessary to get along in school and beyond.

Forum participants realized there are no quick fixes. Given the overlapping nature of learning and behavior problems, educators must effectively assess both academic and nonacademic behavior and pinpoint solu-

Special thanks to Wade Fish for his compilation of the comments made during our small-group sessions.

Special thanks also to these members of our facilitation group who contributed a wealth of excellent ideas: Ruth Aberasturi, Sharon Atkins, Brian Blevins, Keith Bradshaw, Ed Conderan, Lynne DeSpain, Lena Falcone, Sister Joan Marie Gregg, Michael Hazelkorn, Theresia Jackson, Brenda Jones, Anita Kubo, James McAfee, Anthony Moriarty, Sister Mary Karen Oudeans, Barb Poole, Sonya Sansone, Susie Smith, Richard Van Acker, and Keturah Wilson.

tions for both. Any classroom management system must focus on academic success. The more academically successful a child is, the fewer impeding emotional or behavioral problems he or she has.

Utilizing School Personnel to Plan Specially Designed Instruction and Make Appropriate Accommodations and Modifications to Promote Student Success

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (IDEA '97) has defined special education as specially designed instruction to meet the needs of the individual child. While there is a strong push for accommodations and modifications for children with disabilities, few of us participating in the forum felt that is enough. Many students in special education struggle to maintain a satisfactory level of classroom performance. Our instruction must include a prescriptive system for teaching each child. For instance, a student may have a significant auditory memory deficit. The special educator must work to improve the child's auditory memory skills and teach the child to compensate for the processing deficit. If the child is being taught in the general education classroom, the special educator must work cooperatively with the child's teacher to ensure that necessary accommodations are made (e.g., by writing directions on the board that were given orally).

To meet the needs of students with challenging behaviors, we must provide accepting and academically challenging and successful environments for all students. Teachers set that stage by espousing the belief that if students are academically engaged and meeting with high rates of success, there will be a significant reduction in challenging behaviors. Although an enormous amount has been written about classroom management, there is a dearth of information on meeting students' academic needs as a proven strategy to reduce behavior problems. Yet there is classroom research that shows that simple curriculum modifications such as being allowed a choice of academic activity or allowing oral rather than written responses can lead to pronounced improvements in behavior. Frequently, academic tasks are functionally related to classroom behaviors (Reid & Nelson, 2002).

Group members lamented the relative lack of high-quality teaching practices in classrooms for students with E/BD and the fact that their academic deficits may be exacerbated by poor instruction, which accelerates the rate of disruptive behavior. Increasingly, researchers advocate the use of effective teaching techniques not only to ameliorate academic difficulties, but also to decrease levels of disruptive behavior (Sutherland, Wehby, & Yoder, 2002).

Forum participants felt strongly that we must establish classroom practices that include all students and promote both group and individual progress. Johns, Crowley, and Guetzloe (2002) have provided a menu of such practices as Think, Pair, Share or other small-group cooperative learning activities; written response cards; controlled academic choices; and interest-based interventions designed to engage all students in the classroom. Once those are established and in place, it is easier to provide appropriate accommodations and, if necessary, modifications to the curriculum.

An accommodation does not change the curriculum content. A modification does change the curriculum content. An accommodation might include the use of large-print content materials. (Educators tend to think of this as an accommodation for a student with low vision, but it might also be an appropriate accommodation for a student with emotional or behavioral challenges if the student is frustrated by small print and too much material on one page.) Group members identified a variety of practical accommodations that can be made in instruction:

- *Motivational accommodations*—which may include letting the student choose the order of the task or do a portion of the task and then receive a reinforcer, such as a short amount of time on the computer doing a preferred task.
- *Setting accommodations*—which may include allowing the student to work in a different area with fewer distractions or in a separate supervised room.
- *Lecture accommodations*—which may include utilizing PowerPoint to "pause" instruction or stopping every few minutes to check for student understanding. Another lecture accommodation may be for the teacher to provide a copy of his or her lecture notes to the student prior to the lecture. This allows the student to become more familiar with the material beforehand, resulting in the student's being more comfortable and paying better attention during the lecture. Parents sometimes review lecture notes with their child prior to the day of the lecture.
- *Material accommodations*—which may include altering the physical appearance of the assignment or highlighting the key points. Color coding assignments is another example of a material accommodation.
- *Organizational accommodations*—which may include providing visual prompts of where items should be kept or plastic tubs in which all of the student's materials are kept except for those the student is working on at a given time.

- *Assignment accommodations*—which may include altering the amount of the assignment given at one time or allowing the student to choose the order in which to do the assignments.

One or more of these accommodations must be incorporated into daily instruction, paving the way for accommodations that must be made when the student is assessed. The teacher should not introduce a test accommodation that has not been part of instruction throughout the year. For example, it would not be appropriate to have the student use a calculator as a test accommodation without having had him or her learn to use a calculator during instructional time. One member of our group pointed out that selection of a particular accommodation should be predicated, at least in part, on whether it will benefit a single student or more than one student.

With the push toward including more students in high-stakes testing, it is critical that we prepare students not only to take the test (i.e., test-taking strategies) but also to utilize accommodations to maximize their comfort and ability to take the test successfully. While we know that many of our students are not especially excited about test taking, they may be better able to complete the test if they have been taught how to utilize accommodations during the testing.

Instruction, accommodations, and modifications can only be designed effectively based on an accurate assessment of the child's strengths, deficits, and needs. The *diagnostic-prescriptive approach*—the term coined by Samuel Kirk—is critical. Participants discussed the use of various assessment approaches to a multidisciplinary evaluation of the student. Figure 1 depicts major aspects of assessment and the sequence that should be used in planning instruction for students in both the general and the special classroom setting.

Figure 1 provides a framework for general and special educators to work together to meet the needs of students with behavioral challenges. The general educator possesses the critical knowledge of what is expected of the student at a certain grade level-curriculum content, study skills, and social skills. The special educator has knowledge of the diagnostic-prescriptive approach in meeting the needs of the child. The special educator knows the child's needs based on the evaluation and can plan instruction, including accommodations and modifications needed to the general curriculum. Several participants suggested that we must devote effort to building trust with general educators and assurance that we will share the necessary knowledge, resources, and support to work with students. Finally, time is a critical factor in building a collegial relationship between special and general educators.

Ongoing professional development is another component of meeting the diverse needs of students with behavioral challenges. Teachers' perceptions of their skills concerning classroom management and their belief that they can influence student performance despite factors that are beyond their control have been shown to be significant factors contributing to educational placement recommendations (Frey, 2002).

As members of the forum group acknowledged, staff development—especially when and how to provide it—has become a major challenge in schools. The inability of school districts to get substitute teachers has prevented them from allowing faculty to attend workshops or conferences to gain the latest information in the field. After-school sessions are difficult for teachers to attend, not only because they are weary at the end of the day, but also because they have family priorities to meet.

A practical model was shared by Rick Van Acker as part of our discussion group. It consisted of a type of peer-mentoring program. Three teachers would team up in observing and advising each other. During preparation periods, a teacher would visit a colleague's classroom and would look for one positive instructional activity and one classroom practice that could be improved. While the school division provided teachers with financial incentives at the beginning of the program, those incentives are no longer available; even so, some teachers continue the process because they found it beneficial. This program was designed solely as a method of peer support. It was not part of an evaluation system, and the information was not used by an administrator to determine future employment.

Group members acknowledged that their school districts engaged mainly in traditional teacher evaluation systems, but, in at least one instance, there was a choice given in the methodology of evaluation. Teachers could either have the standard evaluation process with an observation by the administrator or develop a self-improvement plan in which they identified goals to work on during the year. Several in our group pointed out that they were not well prepared to collaborate either at the building level or with professionals outside of the school.

Beginning teachers of students with emotional or behavioral problems learn quickly that many of their students are involved with other agencies such as mental health agencies, child and family services agencies, probation and/or parole departments, law enforcement agencies, vocational rehabilitation facilities, and drug and alcohol treatment centers. For both beginning and experienced personnel, the goal is to establish a positive working relationship with individuals within those agencies. Education professionals discover that these agencies have a completely different set of laws and regulations that govern their ability to perform certain

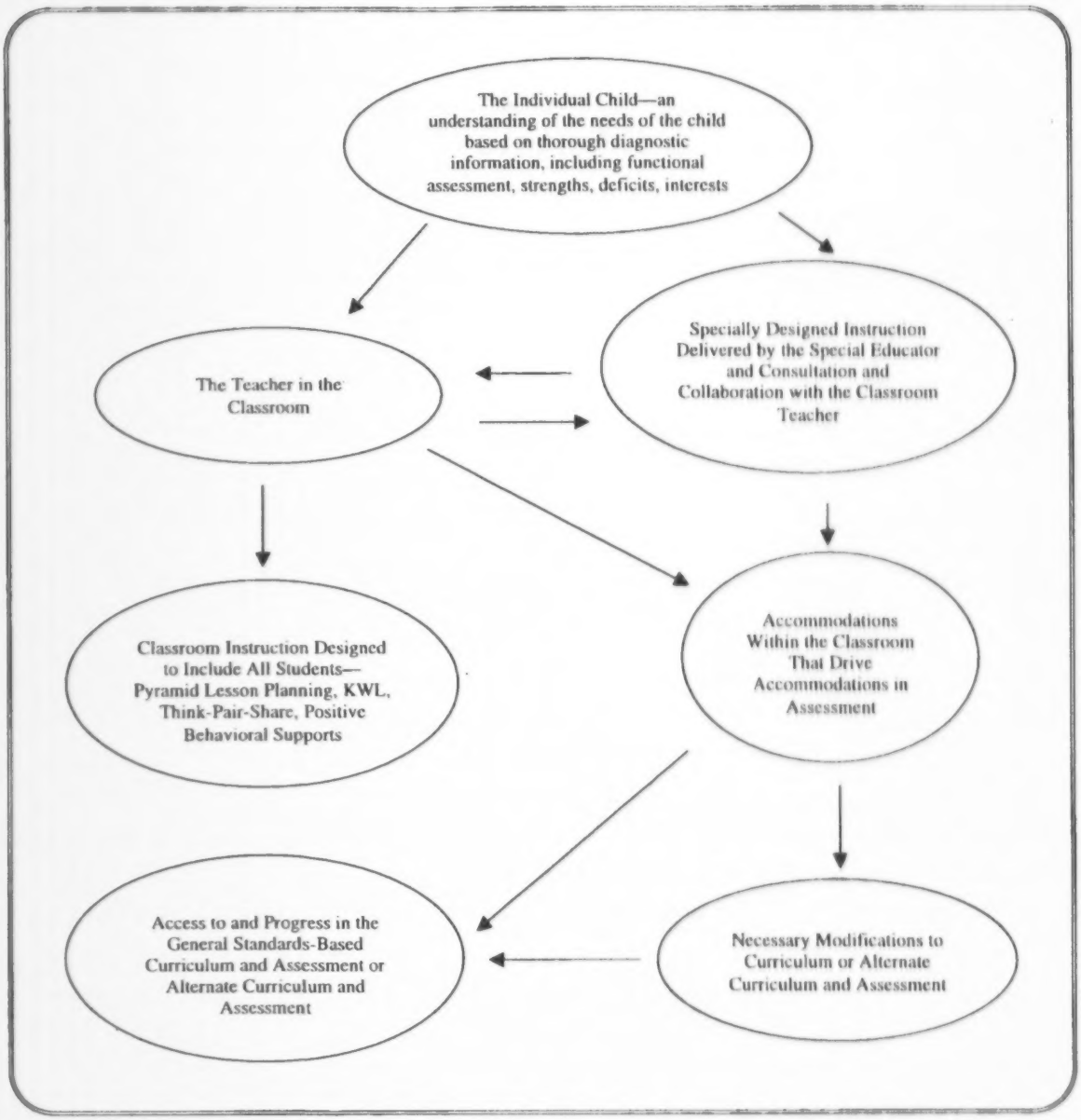
The Individual Child—an understanding of the needs of the child based on thorough diagnostic information, including functional assessment, strengths, deficits, interests
The Teacher in the Classroom
Specially Designed Instruction Delivered by the Special Educator and Consultation and Collaboration with the Classroom Teacher
Classroom Instruction Designed to Include All Students—Pyramid Lesson Planning, KWL, Think-Pair-Share, Positive Behavioral Supports
Accommodations Within the Classroom That Drive Accommodations in Assessment
Access to and Progress in the General Standards-Based Curriculum and Assessment or Alternate Curriculum and Assessment
Necessary Modifications to Curriculum or Alternate Curriculum and Assessment

Figure 1. A Framework for Working with Students with Special Needs Within the General Education Classroom

tasks and to share certain pieces of information. One person in our group pointed out that school personnel must understand that agency personnel may appear uncooperative when in fact they are operating within the parameters that govern their agency. Some of those agencies' personnel may be critical partners in the individualized education program (IEP) process. They may be able to assist the parents in their participation. They may bring to the table useful information about issues faced by the student.

Our group debated at length the range of possible services other agencies should provide in the schools. Participants asserted that it is easier for many families to come into the school as one stop for all necessary services, and many schools encourage agencies to provide services on site and provide space to do so.

However, other participants contended that schools must be careful in providing some services on site. As an example, a day care center within the school for students who are parents might send the message that schools support students having children in their teen years. It follows that schools must decide on what constitutes the right balance between services that should be provided within the school and services that may appear to condone certain behaviors.

Promoting Student Success Through High-Quality Behavioral Intervention Plans

Lewis (2001) outlined the strategies that are critical in establishing training for positive behavioral supports at the state, local, and building levels. Those include proactive versus reactive management, social skills instruction, academic accommodations, parent training, and individual interventions based on functional assessment.

The growing number of schools establishing proactive management base their school-wide programs on positive recognition of appropriate student behavior and logical consequences (other than suspension and expulsion) for inappropriate behavior. This can result in a friendlier, more accepting environment for students with behavioral problems—an environment that results in students' wanting to come to school. Social skills instruction using direct instruction is an integral part of such a program and stems from the conviction that children must be taught how to behave within the school environment and must learn alternative ways of coping with frustration and anger.

Here again, we discussed the importance of appropriate instruction and academic accommodations to reduce student frustration and failure and, instead, set the stage for academic success for students with behavioral challenges.

Along with high-quality classroom instruction, the group agreed that parent support is a must, as is establishing a partnership with parents. Parents know what motivates their child and what strengths the child exhibits. Parents can reinforce appropriate behavior that occurs at school, and school personnel can assist parents by reinforcing appropriate behavior that occurs at home. Not surprisingly, many parents of students with emotional or behavioral problems need even more support than other parents. For example, it is essential that they know that we have empathy for them and do not blame them for all the problems their child exhibits. They need to know that we value their opinion and see them as a partner in the IEP process. Parents also need positive recognition for their role in achieving positive outcomes. One common strategy is to call parents when the student has had a good day. Parents need positive communication with school personnel, including recognition when their child improves in attendance, academics, and/or behavior.

While positive behavioral supports are critical for all students, the individual needs of students with emotional or behavioral disorders often dictate that IEP teams develop effective behavioral intervention plans beyond school-wide and classroom-wide systems. All participants agreed that high-quality meetings among faculty are beneficial. The more educators learn about positive behavioral interventions, the better they can serve on teams creating intervention plans based on functional behavioral assessment.

One educator mentioned the idea of "Clinic Time," when teachers, social workers, and counselors meet to discuss particular classroom problems. The Clinic team meets on a rotating basis with classroom teachers to discuss the behavioral issues they face. That time together is not only beneficial in generating ideas to assist the child, but also provides support to the teachers. Another member of the group commented that she benefited from informal daily meetings with a peer in her school. Another term used to describe this concept was *faculty reflection time.* Finally, collaborative relationships in which teachers visit a colleague's classroom to assist in collecting data for functional assessment can be helpful.

The team approach to the functional assessment process is critical to achieving positive outcomes. While the teacher plays an integral part in the collection of data, there are times when the teacher is too close to the situation to recognize the actual function(s) of the student's behavior. Team members participating in the conduct of a functional behavioral assessment may include a psychologist, social worker, behavior management specialist, and teacher. Those who are part of the team must understand not only the dynamics of behavior but also curriculum and instruction, in that there is ample empirical evidence that effective academic instruction can significantly reduce student behavioral problems. Accordingly, the functional assessment must include close examination of the academic tasks that the student is expected to do and the mode of instruction.

A functional behavioral assessment will accomplish little if school personnel do not take the valuable information gained in this diagnostic activity and use it to prepare an individualized behavioral intervention plan for the student. Hours may have been devoted by team members to collecting data about the student and analyzing the antecedents, behaviors, and consequences only to find that the behavioral intervention plan is not based on available information. One participant

expressed frustration over the use of point systems for an entire group of children and no individualized strategies being used to improve target behavior. The behavioral intervention plan must be aligned with the function(s) of the inappropriate behavior of the child and be based on the functional assessment information. Those persons who are expected to implement the plan should actively participate in its development within the IEP process. Finally, the behavioral intervention plan must place emphasis on student instruction in replacement behaviors that serve the same function(s) as the problem behavior, positive recognition for appropriate behavior, and any necessary accommodations and modifications to ensure appropriate academic instruction.

Conclusion: What Does the Future Hold?

The commitment to improving the lives of students with emotional or behavioral challenges was clearly evident throughout our discussions and is encouraging for the future of our profession. Do we face many challenges? No one could argue otherwise, but in seeking out those collaborative relationships with colleagues, families, and others within and outside the school, we can make a difference. If we focus on making schools a place where children can be academically successful, we can reduce behavioral challenges and increase the learning of all students.

Those of us who work with students with challenging behaviors should be proud of what we do and should celebrate the successes we see in our students—no matter how small those successes. Special educators should also share those successes with others so that state and local policymakers, administrators, school board members see the value in working with our students. Special educators should pledge to continue their own professional development through attending conferences and reading and learning about the most effective approaches in making the academic/behavioral connection.

Borrowing the words of Michael Jackson, we must all commit ourselves one step at a time to "Heal the World, Make It a Better Place" for students with emotional or behavioral challenges.

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Meeting the Needs of Students with Emotional or Behavioral Disorders Through Proactive Approaches

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> I watched the evening news and remember thinking "How tragic" when I heard the report of the murder of a young mother by her boyfriend. The story was completely different the next day in my classroom when I realized that the little girl in my second grade class writing a story about how much she loved her mother was the dead woman's daughter.
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> *Teacher, 2002*

At the heart of the American democracy is the belief that learning and education are the equalizers of the human condition. It is through a "free and appropriate public education" that every person realizes his or her individual potential as a successful, contributing member of society. Today, the challenges to addressing this goal for all students, including students with emotional or behavioral disorders (E/BD), have increased in number and complexity. Since our classroom communities are subsets of society, they often reflect current trends, needs, concerns, and promises. Events reported on the evening news have names and faces, some of which appear the very next day in our classrooms.

Since education is mandated, it often is targeted as a vehicle to address the needs of our youngest citizens. For education to be truly an equalizer, however, schools are expected to address more of the societal challenges inherent in providing a free and appropriate public education. As a result, the concept of *education* has broadened in scope beyond the traditional pursuit of academic excellence for students. Today, education for students with and without E/BD must often meet basic needs (e.g., meals, social skills) before promoting academic success. Due to the complexity and severity of some of these issues, schools are struggling to find new approaches to success within a proactive system of instruction and continuous support.

This chapter examines, first, current issues related to outcomes for students with E/BD within the context of schools that were raised by participants at the Working Forum sponsored by the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders. The next section covers our discussion of a proactive instructional process for addressing individual student needs. Research-based programs that focus on educational accommodations and high-quality behavioral intervention plans are highlighted.

Behavioral Issues in the Schools

A succession of national reports clearly document the needs of our children (see Figure 1). Issues that relate to numerous aspects of basic human existence such as poverty, hunger, and drug usage/dependence demand attention if society is to find solutions to these vexing problems. Drawing from research by the Children's Defense Fund, Marian Wright Edelman concluded:

> Millions of children are not safe physically, educationally, economically, or spiritually. The poor, black youths who shoot drugs on street corners and the rich white youths who do the same thing in their mansions share a common disconnectedness from any hope or purpose. (Children's Defense Fund, 1999, p. 24)

Even within the schools, issues of safety, current educational practices, and academic achievement are well-documented public concerns (Kozol, 1991). Forum participants were of one mind--namely, that tackling these issues poses an enormous challenge.

When we look at these issues as they relate to students with disabilities, outcomes are bleak. That is, one

Every day in the United States:

2,795 teens become pregnant.

105 babies die before their first birthday.

27 children die from poverty.

10 children are killed by guns.

6 teenagers commit suicide.

211 children are arrested for drug abuse.

1,849 children are abused or neglected.

1,512 teenagers drop out of school.

3,288 children run away from home.

Figure 1. A Chilling Look at Contemporary Youth
Source: Children's Defense Fund, 1999

of every four students with disabilities drops out of school, with nearly 20% more unaccounted for in the reports. Of the remaining students who complete high school, 43.9% do not receive a standard diploma, which, in turn, greatly impacts their postschool opportunities. Furthermore, 85% of graduates do not return for higher education or vocational education, and almost 63% remain living at home. Two of three students with disabilities are unemployed after high school, and of the 33% who do work, 80% are not satisfied with their employment. While the documented rates of arrest and incarceration vary by state and disability category, the correlation between students with disabilities and rates of both arrest and incarceration remains high (National Longitudinal Transition Study [NLTS], 1996).

These issues have even greater magnitude as they relate to the educational efficiency of services for students with E/BD (NLTS, 1996). Students with E/BD have lower grades than other students and a higher failure rate, with a 63% failure rate on statewide minimum competency tests. The NLTS revealed that 44% of students with E/BD received one or more failing grades in their most recent school years. Compared to other students with disabilities, students with E/BD are least likely to be educated in the least restrictive environment. In local schools, fewer than 17% of students with E/BD are educated in general education classrooms. In fact, 18% of students with E/BD are educated outside of their local schools, compared to 6% of all students without disabilities.

Only 42% of students with E/BD earn a high school diploma. The dropout rate for these students between grades 9 and 12 is almost 50%, with another 9% dropping out before grade 9. As we previously suggested, 73% of students with E/BD who drop out of school are arrested within 5 years of leaving school.

Discussion among forum participants underscored several critical issues that impact the classroom behavior and academic success of students with E/BD. For example, one member of the group asserted that teacher isolation and lack of district support were barriers to addressing the challenging behaviors of children in the schools. Often, due to a lack of resources, appropriate skills, and technical support, solving problems meant removing the problems. Not surprisingly, the need for high-quality teacher training and support to address the changing needs of students were common and consistent themes. At a time when challenging behaviors are on the increase, resources are dwindling as teachers and administrators struggle to overcome a lack of classroom and programmatic alternatives. Too often, students are removed from the school, through either suspensions or separate educational programs or systems, or they simply drop out.

In seeking to address negative outcomes for students with disabilities, Congress incorporated new requirements into the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (IDEA '97) to ensure proactive planning for alternatives for students with disabilities and their service providers. Instructionally, access to the general education curriculum was mandated in stronger language, describing specific academic strategies and accommodations for all students with disabilities. Other provisions challenged the educational community to probe the reasons (i.e., function) behind impeding behaviors manifested by individual students through the individualized education program (IEP) process. The legislation mandates that specific programs be developed to implement changes that address the current issues for all students, including students with E/BD.

In one group discussion, several themes emerged as to programmatic issues that impact the behavior and academic successes, or lack thereof, of students with E/BD in the schools. The following summarizes the major approaches participants felt are essential to meeting the needs of students with E/BD, both instructionally and behaviorally.

Utilizing School Personnel to Make Accommodations and Modifications to Promote Student Success

Given the multiple needs of students in our schools, educators must first realize and accept the challenges

of meeting the needs of all students within the school. This underlying philosophy must be shared by all stakeholders in the school organization, including parents, community members, and businesses. A common commitment to creating a supportive and comprehensive network for the school, family, and community must be articulated. By creating classrooms, schools, and programs around the concepts of connection, competence, self-control, and contribution (Little, 2001), educators can create caring classroom and school-wide communities that address the basic developmental needs of all students within an educational circle of influence.

In the classroom, the teacher, in collaboration with members of the IEP team, is the ultimate decision maker for program development, curriculum mastery, and instructional techniques and strategies used for each student. With the federal mandate of access to the general education curriculum (IDEA '97), the teacher's skills as a decision maker are critical to high-quality instruction of all students. Teachers must be knowledgeable of the specific class content and pedagogy and be able to implement group/individual practices and strategies competently while consistently monitoring student outcomes. To expertly address the needs of all students—especially those with diverse behavioral needs—a teacher must have a rich and varied knowledge base of instructional strategies, methods, and materials. Given the rapidity with which new information emerges, teachers must receive support and technical assistance through ongoing professional development and peer coaching as well as other available resources (e.g., professional development schools).

A proactive instructional process must be used to plan for both academic and behavioral instruction. Although content may vary across settings, classrooms, grade levels, and states, this framework for planning instruction within any given classroom is based upon established curricular standards and proven effective practices for accommodating individual student needs. The consensus of the forum group was that the proactive process includes the following elements:

1. *Outcomes and curriculum goals and objectives.* Curriculum planning for instruction must begin with clearly delineated outcomes and goals for learning. Whether described by researchers, state departments of education, school districts, or members of an IEP team, the intended outcomes for students—both academic and behavioral—must be clearly defined for academic and social success.

2. *Prerequisite skills.* Once knowledge of and agreement regarding intended outcomes have been established, it is critical to determine the needs of the students within the context of those expectations. Whether assessment is done formally or informally, as a class or as an individual, the next step in this decision-making process is the determination of each student's current knowledge of the particular skill. Once preskills are assessed, there may be changes to the planning with regard to the appropriateness of the stated outcomes for each student.

3. *Instructional delivery (content).* The next two decisions—decisions about the content (i.e., the *what*) and process (i.e., the *how*) of instruction—occur almost simultaneously. What will the teacher do to facilitate the student's learning of the stated content outcomes, both academic and behavioral? To be successful, teachers may need additional professional development to learn research-based instructional approaches, social skills curricula, and classroom management based on expectations.

4. *Engaging the learner (process).* Research clearly shows the need to engage the learner in the lesson (Brophy & Good, 1986; Goodlad, 1984; Greenwood, 2002). Increasing academic learning time (Berliner, 1989) has direct positive benefits for student mastery of stated outcomes. Therefore, student participation has a positive impact on student outcomes. When deciding specifically on the process to use, it is critical to ask the following questions:

   - How will the students demonstrate mastery of the stated objectives?
   - Will all of the students need this level of support?
   - If not, then what other supports are needed by some of the students?
   - Will self-monitoring support be needed?

5. *Specific academic and nonacademic needs and supports.* For students who have not typically been successful in classrooms, either behaviorally or academically, there may be other important goals. Some may be directly related to the lesson outcome, and some may not. For example, mastery of the science curriculum is important during a cooperative learning lesson on insects. But mastery of appropriate social skill interactions by all students, and especially by students with E/BD, is a critical nonacademic outcome that may also need to be taught, supported, monitored, and reinforced.

6. *Accommodation of curricular outcomes.* In a general sense, accommodations are any adjustment or adaptation in the environment, instruction, or materials used for learning that enhances the student's participation and performance in the learning activity. In addition, an accommodation allows the individual to use his or her current skill repertoire while promoting the acquisition of new skills. Accommodations "level the playing field" by provid-

ing the assistance the student needs to achieve the goals of the lesson.

There are seven types of accommodations: size, time, input, output, difficulty, participation, and level of support (e.g., Ebeling, Deschenes, & Sprague, 1994). Any lesson can be accommodated for students with specific needs within the classroom. For example, strategic use of computer word processors can help one student accommodate for a learning disability in spelling or can accommodate another student's need to be actively engaged at all times. The overall list of accommodations is as varied as the needs of the students, the demands of the lesson goals, and the creativity of the teacher.

7. *Modifications of curricular outcomes.* Given the unique needs of some students with disabilities, it may be necessary to modify or change the goal of the lesson, either partially or completely. In developing approaches to do so, it is useful to differentiate between accommodations and modifications. When modifying curriculum and/or instruction, the integrity of the agreed-upon instructional goal is being changed, adapted, or discarded completely. That fact must be clearly communicated to the members of the IEP or Section 504 team who are involved in the planning process.

   Students with disabilities may be included in a classroom for varying academic, social, and/or behavioral goals. Outcomes of the lesson may be revised for these students, but the same materials are used. Given the specific IEP goals for a student with disabilities, she or he could learn some but not all aspects of a particular lesson. Modification of learner outcomes and activities should be determined collaboratively among all team members. At times, students could be taught a related goal, but with different materials (e.g., geography with puzzles).

8. *Evaluation by outcomes.* The teaching/learning process is not complete without routine assessment of student progress, which is perhaps best accomplished by means of curriculum-based assessment. *Curriculum-based assessment* (Deno, 1987) refers to any approach that uses direct observation and recording of a student's performance in the school curriculum as a basis for obtaining information to make further instructional decisions for the entire grade level or an individual student, as appropriate. These data enable teachers to continue the instructional process of targeting new outcomes and goals for instruction. In addition, knowledge of progress is reinforcing to students.

Promoting Student Success Through High-Quality Behavioral Intervention Plans

The goal of planning, implementing, and monitoring research-based instructional strategies is to improve student academic and behavioral performance, effects that are successful with most students. For students with more challenging behaviors, more complex and intrusive ways to pinpoint the exact nature of the problem, collect data, and collaborate within a proactive, problem-solving approach have been developed, including functional behavioral assessment (FBA) and positive behavior support (PBS). Together, FBA and PBS constitute a multitiered process of intervention that is a proactive and effective way to support individuals who exhibit disruptive and/or dangerous behaviors. The approach has evolved in clinical settings over the past three decades as an outgrowth of applied behavior analysis (Alberto & Troutman, 1990) and has come to describe a set of assessment and intervention strategies intended to both reduce problem behavior and increase desirable behavior, leading to more positive student postschool outcomes (Horner et al., 1990).

The central features of this approach to the development of high-quality, proactive behavioral intervention plans include

1. A foundational philosophy of respect.
2. Knowledge of the context of behavior in relation to the function of the behavior.
3. Emphasis on directly teaching replacement skills, not merely suppressing inappropriate behaviors.
4. A collaborative approach to team problem-solving.
5. Plans that include multiple components, identified on an individual basis (Dunlap, Hieneman, Knoster, Fox, Anderson, & Albin, 2000).

In putting FBA and PBS into practice, multidisciplinary teams collaborate to identify the specific contextual needs for individual students with E/BD across multiple settings and develop positive supports aligned with those needs. This comprehensive, problem-solving approach is focused on skill building at the student level and capacity building at the adult level to achieve success for the individual student. This proactive process operates at the classroom and building levels; it can include multiple agencies to better identify the specific needs of students with challenging behaviors and create an action plan to meet those needs. Through collaboration, increased training, and implementation support, new techniques will lead to student successes.

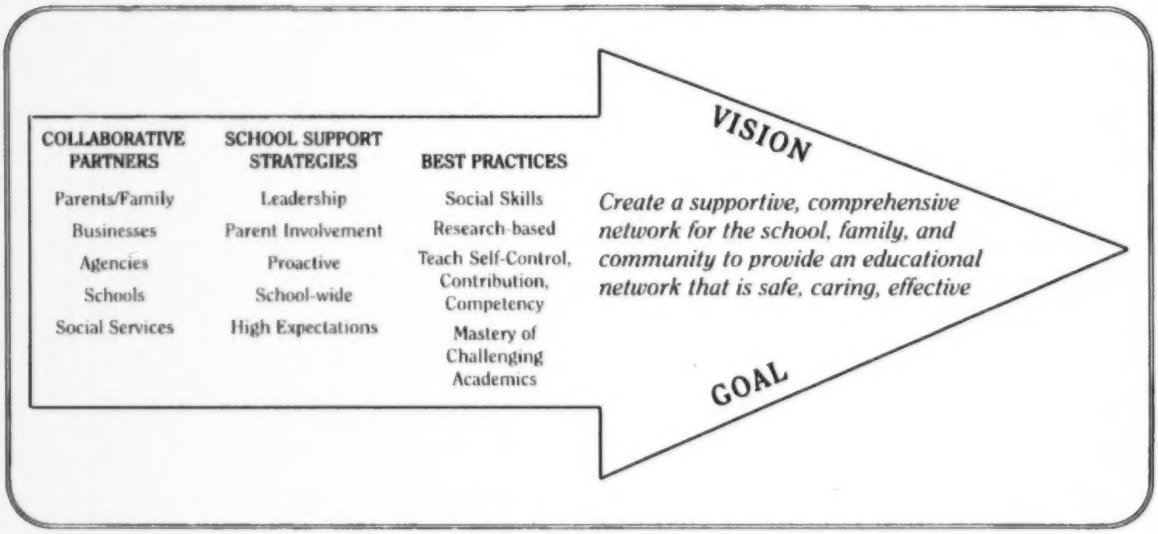

Figure 2. Proactive Approaches to Meeting Needs of Students with Emotional or Behavioral Disorders: A Path to Success

Conclusion

Today, school personnel are expected to not only promote academic excellence among students, but also undertake the challenging task of improving students' social and behavioral functioning. The most effective programs target both prevention and intervention for academics and behavior by means of proactive approaches (Van Acker, 1995). Accomplishing the goal of high-quality programming for students with E/BD requires a comprehensive, collaborative, and proactive approach (see Figure 2). Participants share a common vision and accept the responsibility to create a supportive, comprehensive network that encompasses the school, family, and community for all of the students. This vision sets the standard for making decisions about changes in one or more aspects of the students' ecosystem. School-wide faculty/student expectations, as well as prevention and intervention programs—including counseling and mental health services—must be developed and implemented. High expectations for academic and behavioral excellence must be communicated to each collaborative member of the community (e.g., parents, agencies, social services).

Toward these ends, school personnel must create multiple opportunities for students to master both academic and behavioral curriculums. Research-based instructional practices (e.g., cooperative learning, peer tutoring, strategy instruction) can offer multiple opportunities for students to succeed on a group/individual basis. Individual behavioral plans further define the contextual needs of students by providing a supportive network. However, significant changes must occur at multiple levels, and new resources must be allocated (Walker, Colvin, & Ramsey, 1995). Comprehensive professional development programs are necessary to create and implement these changes within classrooms and schools. Moreover, proactive programming within schools and across multiple agencies takes time. Notwithstanding the challenges, creating multiple pathways to success for all students through safe and effective schooling represents a worthy goal. If we consider the current outcomes for our students, can we afford to do anything else?

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ISBN 0-86586-973-1

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